Focus on Learning

for

SUPPLEMENTARY EDUCATION PROGRAMS

2020 EDITION

ACCREDITING COMMISSION FOR SCHOOLS, WESTERN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

www.acswasc.org
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Introduction

If educational organizations are to concentrate all their energies and resources on successful student learning, a holistic, honest examination of the actual program for students is required. Through the use of empowering criteria for supplementary programs, new communication patterns, evidence gathering techniques, and insight from fellow educators, the appropriate accreditation process can serve as a vehicle to move SEP community member(s) into meaningful improvement and accountability.

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

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

Background

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

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

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

SEP Improvement Cycle

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

ACS WASC Accreditation Cycle of Quality

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

**New Cycle**

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

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

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

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

**Year Five:** Review of all profile data, progress report, self-study process, refinement of SEP action plan
Year Six: Completion of self-study, including refinement of SEP action plan; full self-study visit, including further revision of SEP action plan after the review of visiting committee report.

Guiding Principles

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

- Total involvement and collaboration of all stakeholders.
- A culture that nurtures and supports the well-being of all students.
- Accomplishment of its vision, mission, and SEP learner outcomes.*
- High achievement by all students in relation to SEP learner outcomes and academic standards.
- Use of multiple ways to analyze data about student achievement, student and staff perceptions/interviews, examining student work, and observing students engaged in learning.
- Evaluation of the program effectiveness in relation to 1) impact on student learning based on the SEP learner outcomes, major student learner needs, and academic standards; and 2) meeting an acceptable level of quality in accordance with the ACS WASC criteria.
- Alignment of prioritized findings to the SEP action plan goals focusing on student achievement.
- Continuous improvement/accountability.

Importance of the Vision, Mission, and Learner Outcomes

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

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

Importance of the Academic Standards

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

**Criteria**

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

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

**Importance of Data Analysis**

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

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

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

**Self-Study Expectations**

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

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

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

Focus on Learning Self-Study Process

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Task 1:
- Analyze and reflect upon the SEP’s progress and the impact on student learning since the previous full self-study

Task 2:
- Refine the student/community profile based on the analyzed and disaggregated data; clarify the SEP learner outcomes and major student learner needs
Task 3:
- Evaluate the quality of the SEP in relation to the ACS WASC SEP criteria with emphasis on the identified major student learner needs; synthesize the information, determine strengths and growth areas for continuous SEP improvement.

Task 4:
- Summarize identified major student learner needs based on profile and Focus Group analysis and findings.

Task 5:
- Revise the SEP action plan.
- Define growth targets for student groups and SEP goals.
- Review and revise as necessary the established ongoing follow-up process to monitor implementation and accomplishment of the SEP action plan.

Visit

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

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

Accreditation Status Factors

The Accrediting Commission for Schools grants accreditation based on the findings and recommendation of the visiting committee. Accreditation factors have been developed by the Commission that reflect the overall aspects of continuous improvement and SEP goals. These factors have incorporated the five expectations of the self-study process, the ACS WASC SEP criteria organized by categories, and important emphases already present within the ACS WASC SEP criteria. These factors include:

1. Involvement and collaboration of stakeholders in the self-study.
2. Acceptable progress by all students toward clearly defined learner outcomes, academic standards, and other institutional and/or governing authority expectations.
3. Organization for Student Learning that supports high achievement for all students.
4. Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment that supports high achievement for all students.
5. Support for Student Personal and Academic Growth that supports high achievement for all students.
6. The alignment of a long-range SEP action plan to the SEP’s areas of greatest need to support high achievement of all students.

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

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

**Follow-up**

After the visit, the SEP refines and implements the SEP action plan for improvement. The SEP action plan integrates the growth areas for continuous improvement identified by the visiting committee. The SEP annually reviews progress, and refines the “next steps” in meeting the goals of the SEP action plan. This assessment of progress is always done with respect to evidence that students are accomplishing the learner outcomes and academic standards, especially in relation to the major student learner needs. The governing authority is involved in the ongoing improvement process and ensures that the follow-up process is integral.
ACSM WASC Supplementary Education Program (SEP) Criteria

Category A: Organization for Student Learning

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

A2. ACS WASC SEP Governance/Management Criterion: The program has a clear governance/management structure with transparent roles and responsibilities designed to ensure long-term success and accountability.

A3. ACS WASC SEP Leadership and Staff Criterion: The SEP leadership is accountable to the program’s management/governance body and is responsible for setting and meeting the operational goals in support of the program’s mission and vision statements. The SEP leadership and staff, including teachers of record, are qualified for their assigned responsibilities, are committed to the SEP’s purpose, and engage in ongoing professional development that promotes student learning.

A4. ACS WASC SEP Environment Criterion: The SEP online program/courses’ staff understand the SEP’s purpose, set high expectations for students, facilitate active learning, and demonstrate respect for differences, in a trusting, caring, and professional learning environment.

A5. ACS WASC SEP Continuous Improvement Process Criterion: The SEP leadership takes a comprehensive and integrated approach to ensuring excellent teaching and learning for students that facilitates continuous improvement which (a) is driven by the SEP action plan to reflect upon and improve organizational effectiveness, (b) has SEP community support and involvement, including management or advisory board, (c) effectively guides the work of the SEP, and (d) provides for accountability through monitoring of the SEP action plan.

A6. ACS WASC SEP Resources and Planning Criterion: The SEP plans for and expends financial and material resources using sound business practices to accomplish the SEP’s mission, vision and learner outcomes. The governing authority and the SEP Leadership/Management execute responsible resource planning for the future to address learner needs and curriculum, technology, academic support, professional development and fiscal viability of the program.

Category B: Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment

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

B2. ACS WASC SEP Instruction 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 the learner outcomes.
B3. ACS WASC SEP Assessment Criterion: Assessments are frequently used by teachers and student and integrated into the teaching/learning process. The assessment results are the basis for (a) measurement of each student's progress toward SEP learner outcomes and academic standards, (b) regular evaluation and improvement of curriculum and instructional approaches, and (c) allocation of resources.

Category C: Support for Student Personal and Academic Growth

C1. ACS WASC SEP Student and Parent/Guardian Support Criterion: SEP leadership implements student and parent/guardian support services to address the differentiated needs of learners. Learning resources and related instructional materials are available to support and enrich learning and provide learners with multiple, engaging learning paths as appropriate.

C2. ACS WASC SEP Multi-tiered Support Criterion: All students receive appropriate academic and multi-tiered support to ensure student learning and success. Educational and community partners provide additional support services as needed to support student academic success.
The Self-Study: Background Information
SEP Self-Study Coordinator
Self-Study Report Preparation Checklist

- Establish timelines and support mechanisms
- Provide orientation for staff and stakeholders
- Form Leadership/Management and other groups

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

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

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

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

4. Establish the Leadership/Management, Data/Profile Group, Home and Program-wide Focus Groups or a Committee of the Whole.
   ➔ Note: Each Focus Group (or Committee of the Whole) usually concentrates on one criteria category and examines the effectiveness of that part of the SEP program; this analysis is also done in relation to two to three identified major student learner needs, related SEP learner
outcomes and academic standards that the Leadership/Management selected based on student achievement data.

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

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

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

   Training should emphasize:
   - A review of the basic purpose of the self-study, visit, and follow-up: an improvement process
   - The expectations of the self-study
   - The importance of verification: in-depth gathering and analysis of evidence
   - The suggested tasks of the model self-study or the SEP’s modifications
     - The extreme importance of all committee member(s) understanding the use of the learner outcomes, academic standards, standardized testing and reporting and local assessment data, and assigned criteria
     - The role of the Focus Group chair as:
       1) Group facilitators of committee discussions and syntheses
       2) Coordinators for gathering of evidence, especially analysis of student work and observations of students working
   - The essential participation in regular meetings to review progress of the self-study.

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

**Additional Coordinator Checklists**
- The **Self-Study Coordinator Visit Preparation Checklist** can be found on page 59.
- The **Self-Study Coordinator Post-Visit Checklist** can be found on page 97.
- The SEP Coordinator Checklists on the ACS WASC website.
### Model Timeline: Flow of Activities

#### — Year Prior to Self-Study —

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>November–February Activities</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Self-Study Product</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Task 1:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Analyze and reflect upon the SEP’s progress and the impact on student learning since the previous full self-study</td>
<td>Leadership/Management, All Stakeholders</td>
<td>Chapter I: Progress Report on SEP action plan, including integrated growth areas for continuous improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Task 2:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Refine the student/community profile based on the analyzed and disaggregated data; clarify the SEP-wide learner outcomes and major student learner needs</td>
<td>Leadership/Management, All Stakeholders</td>
<td>Chapter II: Student/Community Profile</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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#### February–June Activities and September–December or January Activities

**Task 3:**
- Evaluate the quality of the SEP program in relation to the ACS WASC criteria with emphasis on the identified major student learner needs; synthesize the information, determine strengths and growth areas for continuous SEP improvement.
  - Committee of the Whole or Focus Groups
  - Home Groups
  - All Stakeholders
  - Notes/evidence for informational sharing between Home Groups and Focus Groups
  - Self-Study Report, Chapter III, “Self-Study Findings"
  - Pertinent evidence available for review by visiting committee
  - Chapter III: Self-Study Findings

**Task 4:**
- Summarize identified major student learner needs based on profile and Focus Group analysis and findings.
  - Leadership/Management and/or Student Profile Committee
  - All Stakeholders
  - Chapter IV: Summary of Identified Major Student Learner Needs and Focus Group findings

**Task 5:**
- Revise the SEP action plan
- Define growth targets for student groups and SEP goals
- Review and revise as necessary the established ongoing follow-up process to monitor implementation and accomplishment of the SEP action plan
  - Leadership/Management
  - All Stakeholders via Home and Focus Groups
  - Self-Study Report, Chapter V, “SEP action plan”

#### February–April Ongoing Activities

- The visit
  - SEP/Visiting Committee
  - VC report
- No later than six weeks following the visit submit an updated SEP action plan to ACS WASC incorporating growth areas for continuous improvement left by the visiting committee
  - SEP
  - Updated SEP action plan
- Implement and monitor the SEP action plan and its impact on student learning
  - SEP
  - Ongoing progress reports
Self-Study Report Format

Preface

Explain the SEP self-study process used to accomplish the expectations of the self-study, i.e., timeline, stakeholder involvement, any modifications from the model self-study process. By addressing these expectations of the self-study, the SEP will have accomplished:

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

Chapter I: Progress Report (correlates to Task 1)

- Describe any significant developments that have had a major impact on the SEP programs since the last full visit.
- Comment on the process for implementing and monitoring the SEP action plan.
- Summarize progress on each section of the current SEP action plan that incorporated all SEP critical areas (growth areas for continuous improvement) from the last full self-study and all intervening visits.
- Comment on the original critical areas for follow-up (growth areas for continuous improvement) not in the current SEP action plan.

Chapter II: Student/Community Profile and Supporting Data and Findings (correlates to Task 2)

- Provide findings, noting trends, irregular patterns or anomalies for the data, including longitudinal and disaggregated data (see profile guide)
  - Demographic data
  - Student performance data
  - Perception data.
- Provide a brief summary that includes:
  - Implications of the data, including those related to student groups
  - Identification of two to three preliminary major student learner needs (at this stage of analysis)
  - Important questions to be discussed in the Focus Groups.
Appendices:
A. Results of student questionnaire/interviews
B. Results of parent/community questionnaire/interviews
C. Additional details of the program
D. Any pertinent additional data (or have on exhibit during the visit)
E. Budgetary information, including budget pages from the SEP action plan
F. Glossary of terms unique to the program.

Chapter III: Self-Study Findings (correlates to Task 3 and Tools)

For each category of criteria include:
1. A list of strengths
2. A list of prioritized growth areas for continuous improvement.

⇒ Note: The three criteria categories are:
A. Organization for Student Learning
B. Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment
C. Support for Student Personal and Academic Growth

Share pertinent evidence for review by visiting committee through hyperlink or Dropbox.

Chapter IV: Summary from Analysis of Identified Major Student Learner Needs (correlates to Task 4)

- Summarize the identified major student learner needs based on Student/Community Profile and Focus Group findings.

Chapter V: SEP Action Plan (correlates to Task 5)

A. Revise the SEP action plan.
B. Describe the SEP’s follow-up process to ensure a continuous improvement process.
SEP Groups: Probable Players

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

➤ Note: Smaller SEPs may find that using a “Committee of the Whole” will be more effective in assessing the program for students.

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

Leadership/Management

Responsibilities:

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

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

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

Responsibility:
- Development/refinement of student/community profile.

Member(s) of the committee (suggested membership based on the size of the SEP)
- Leadership
- Certificated staff
- Students
- Parents

**Focus Groups (or Committee of the Whole)**

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

Member(s) of the Focus Groups:
- Leadership/Management
- Faculty member(s) from each subject area, grade level, or programs
- Non-certificated staff
- Students
- Parents/Educational Partners.

**Types of Home Groups, if applicable**

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

Responsibilities:
- Study and understand the student community profile
- Participate in the development of descriptors for the learner outcomes
- Understand the concepts of the ACS WASC SEP criteria
- Gather and analyze what is being taught and learned with respect to student learning needs, selected learner outcomes, academic standards, other curricular references, and ACS WASC SEP criteria
- Provide results of this analysis to Focus Groups
- Provide feedback to Leadership/Management on the SEP action plan based on Focus Group findings and growth areas.
Member(s) of the Home Groups:
- All certificated personnel in a given subject area or grade level
- Non-certificated staff.

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

**Home Groups: Student Group**

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

Member(s) of the student group:
- Representative students enrolled in the SEP.

**Home Groups: Parent Group**

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

Member(s) of the parent group:
- Parents reflecting the diversity of the students enrolled in the SEP
- One or more non-parent educational partners
- One faculty member.
The Self-Study
Task 1: Analyze and reflect upon the SEP’s progress and the impact on student learning since the previous full self-study

How well are all students learning and achieving?

Is the SEP doing everything possible to support high achievement of all students?

Product

Self-Study Report
Chapter I: “Progress Report”

• Describe any significant developments that have had a major impact on the SEP and/or specific curricular programs since the last full visit.

• Comment on the process for implementing and monitoring the SEP action plan.

• Summarize progress on each section of the current SEP action plan that incorporated all critical areas for follow-up (growth areas for continuous improvement) from the last full self-study and all intervening visits.

• Comment on the original critical areas for follow-up (growth areas for continuous improvement) not in the current SEP action plan.

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

Participants

• Leadership/Management

• All Stakeholders.

Procedures

1. **Significant Developments:** Describe any significant developments that have had a major impact on the SEP and/or specific curricular programs since the last full visit.

2. **SEP Growth Areas for Continuous Improvement:** List the SEP growth areas for continuous student improvement (formerly critical areas for follow-up) from the visiting committee report for the prior full visit and any recommendations from subsequent visits/reports.

⇒ Note: SEPs that have had initial visits should respond to the recommendations left at that time.

3. **Ongoing Follow-up Process:** Comment on the process for implementing and monitoring the SEP action plan; this is the SEP action plan to which the ACS WASC critical areas for follow-up (growth areas for continuous improvement) from the prior self-study and any other visit have been integrated.

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

5. **Growth Areas for Continuous Improvement (formerly Critical Areas for Follow-up) not currently in the SEP action plan:** Comment separately on the growth areas for continuous improvement that have already been addressed and are currently not in the SEP action plan. In addition, comment on those “just do its” or isolated growth areas for continuous improvement that were not included in the ongoing SEP action plan. Comment on the impact of these growth areas on student learning. Cite evidence.

✔️ **Self-check questions**

- Did the SEP show how the critical areas of follow-up (growth areas for continuous improvement) and recommendations identified by visiting committees since the last full self-study were integrated into the SEP action plan?
- Did the SEP address each section of the SEP action plan?
- Did the progress report include data that indicates whether staff and students met established growth targets?
- Does the report show how each section of the action plan impacted student accomplishment of the major student learner needs and one or more learner outcomes?
- Did the SEP show how other critical areas of follow-up were addressed that were not part of the SEP action plans?
Task 2: **Refine the student/community profile based on the analyzed and disaggregated data; clarify the SEP learner outcomes and major student learner needs**

**Who are our students?**
**What does the data tell us and not tell us?**
**What questions does it raise?**

➤ **Note:** The purpose of this profile is to provide a source of basic data and information that is used to analyze the program and its impact on student learning.

**Product**

- **Task 2:** Self-Study Report: Chapter I: “Student/Community Profile—Data and Findings”
  - Provide findings, noting trends, irregular patterns or anomalies for the data, including longitudinal and disaggregated data (see profile guide)
  - Demographic data
  - Student performance data
  - Perception data.

- **Provide a brief summary** that includes:
  - Implications of the data, including those related to student groups
  - Identification of two to three preliminary major student learner needs (at this stage of analysis)
  - Important questions to be discussed in the Focus Groups.

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

**Participants**

- Leadership/Management
- All stakeholders (suggestion: use Home Groups, SEP Focus Groups, Committee of the Whole or total staff, as applicable).
Procedures

1. Leadership/Management and/or Committee of the Whole:
   a. Review the student/community profile guide and the current student/community profile. (See the guide on the following pages.)
   b. Gather the needed additional demographic and student performance data.
   c. Present data through the use of appropriate charts, tables, and graphs.
   d. Disaggregate, as appropriate, interpret and analyze the data.
   e. Provide findings, noting trends and patterns, for the data, including longitudinal and disaggregated data.

2. Leadership/Management and/or Committee of the Whole, including students:
   a. Prepare a brief draft overall summary:
      - What are the implications of the data with respect to student performance?
      - Select two to three major student learner needs based on the data, noting the correlated SEP learner outcomes.
      - List important questions that have been raised by the analysis of the student performance and demographic data.
   b. Using the draft summary of the data, review the core values and beliefs, the vision, the mission, and existing SEP learner outcomes. Discuss the major student learner needs, future challenges.
      - What are the current and future learning needs of the students to prepare students for college, career and lifelong learning?
   c. Refine the SEP learner outcomes and indicators in light of the data analysis.

3. Leadership/Management, Certificated Staff, and Other Relevant Stakeholders
   a. Discussion: Disseminate the draft progress and profile reports (Chapters I and II); hold group discussions based on the SEP learner outcomes and current knowledge about major student learner needs.
      Use the following questions.
      - Who are the students?
      - How well are they performing?
      - Who’s achieving? Who’s not achieving?
      - What has been accomplished? What is in progress?
   b. Preliminary Insights: Have the staff and other stakeholders generate from the discussion their preliminary overall implications, major student learner needs, and potential important questions. This will be an important verification of the draft work done by the Leadership/Management and Student/Community Profile Committee on these areas.
      Determine if there is agreement at this time on the identified major student learner needs and important questions. Are there additions?
c. **Draft Summary**: Use the implications, major student learner needs, and questions identified by the staff and additional Leadership/Management notes to finalize the **draft summary**.

d. **Use of Summary**: Have certificated staff and other stakeholders use the draft summary of the data implications, preliminary identified major student learner needs, and the questions throughout the Focus Group work (Task 3).

➤ **Note**: These preliminary major student learner needs will be updated and modified based on the analysis of the program using the ACS WASC SEP criteria and indicators (Task 4). The profile and summary will be updated as additional data becomes available throughout the self-study process.

✅ **Self-Check Questions**

- Have the certificated staff member(s) and other relevant stakeholders discussed the profile and progress since the last full self-study or initial visit?

- Has the program obtained input from relevant member(s) of the SEP community as the implications and identification of the major student learner needs are determined based on the data and progress?

- Has there been discussion of the relationship of the two to three major student learner needs to the learner outcomes and descriptors?

- Is there commitment to accomplishing the SEP’s vision, mission, and learner outcomes (including major student learner needs) from all certified staff, all students, and other stakeholder/educational partners?

- Have the three to four important questions been determined that will be discussed within the Home/Focus groups or Committee of the Whole?

- Do the stakeholders/educational partners understand how to use the profile to guide further inquiry about student achievement and the SEP programs?
ACS WASC SEP STUDENT/COMMUNITY PROFILE GUIDE

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

Overview of the SEP:

• When the SEP was founded and by whom
• Brief description of students served by the SEP
• Location(s) of the SEP and any location changes
• Note whether the SEP teaches core classes, offers tutoring services only, and/or provides online options for students.

Demographic Student Data (three years of data, if possible):

• Grade level distribution
• Gender
• Ethnicity or nationality
• Student enrollment data for the past three years.

Student Performance Data (three years of data, if possible):

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

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

Administrative and Teaching/Support Staff Information

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

• Comment on any teacher not teaching in their areas of major or minor preparation and specify the related preparation interest, experience, or ability qualifying them to teach in the areas assigned
• Verification of a criminal background check on file for each employee
• Describe the professional development training provided for teachers and other staff member(s) and its impact on student success and achievement.

SEP Financial Support Information

• Expenditures per pupil
• Monies from tuition and other funding sources
Educational Partner Connections

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

SEP Learner Outcomes

- Using data generated in this profile and other sources (perception data, results of examining student work, observations, etc.), comment on the degree to which the students are achieving all the SEP learner outcomes.

Perception Data

- Results of surveys, about how the stakeholders view the SEP (students, parents, staff, community served).

Summary of Profile (Prepare a draft summary of what these data sources tell about student achievement and the school community for discussion by all stakeholders—Task 2, procedures #2 and #3.)

1. What are the implications of the data with respect to student performance?
2. Select two to three major preliminary student learner needs based on the data.
3. List important questions that have been raised by the analysis of student performance, demographics, and perception data.
Task 3: Evaluate the quality of the SEP program and operations in relation to the ACS WASC SEP criteria with emphasis on the identified major student learner needs and related learner outcomes; synthesize the findings, determine strengths and growth areas for continuous improvement

Product

- Self-Study Report
  - Chapter IV: “Self-Study Findings”
For each category of criteria, prepare a brief analytical summary that includes:
  1. Findings and supporting evidence for each of the criterion in the category
  2. A list of strengths
  3. A list of prioritized growth areas for continuous improvement
Provide links to pertinent evidence for review by visiting committee. This may include samples of representative student work that have been analyzed.

➤ Note: The three criteria categories are:
  A. Organization for Student Learning
  B. Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment
  C. Support for Student Personal and Academic Growth

Participants

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

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

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

1. **Program-wide Focus Groups:**
   (Note: Ensure all stakeholders have discussed the Student/Community Profile and 2–3 major student learner needs.)
   Review and discuss all three categories of criteria in order to understand that these concepts are guidelines for systematic improvement. The focus is on student accomplishment of the learner outcomes and major student learner needs. These criteria will be used to evaluate the SEP program in relation to the SEP’s vision, mission, learner outcomes, and major student learner needs.
   ➔ Note: Each Focus Group should use the indicators related to group’s designated category and provide supporting evidence.

2. **Focus Groups or Committee of the Whole:**
   a. Discuss in detail the criteria and indicators for the assigned criteria category and decide what is already known from experience at the SEP.
   b. Review the drafts for Chapters I and II (progress report, profile and draft summary on data implications, the preliminary two to three major student learner needs, and important questions.
   c. Based on the criteria and indicators, decide what data/information/evidence is needed to determine what currently exists and its effectiveness.
   d. Review the list of areas to analyze and examine for each criterion to assist with this discussion.
   e. Particularly, decide what is needed from all the Home Groups.
   ➔ Note: Home Groups must conduct a program-wide analysis of student work and student engagement in learning based on the identified major student learner needs and related learner outcomes. Written conclusions from this study must be summarized and shared with all Focus Groups, especially, Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

   **What have the Home Groups or Committee of the Whole learned from examining student work related to the major student learner needs?**

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

4. **Home Groups or Committee of the Whole:**
   Share findings with appropriate program-wide Focus Groups. (Note: This can be done through notes and evidence for the Focus Group representative from each Home Group and also through shared documents.)
5. **Focus Groups or Committee of the Whole:**

Discuss and analyze the Home Group information gathered and analyzed about the selected major student learner needs, related learner outcomes, and academic standards. Then examine the SEP program in relation to the ACS WASC SEP criteria and indicators assigned to each Focus Group or the Committee of the Whole. 

(\textit{Note:} The Leadership/Management can assist the Organization for Student Learning Focus Group with the following SEP criteria: A1, Purpose, A2, Governance, A6, Resources and Planning.)

\textbf{What are we learning about the impact each part of the program and operation has on student learning?}

6. **Focus Groups or Committee of the Whole:**

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

7. **Home Groups or Committee of the Whole:**

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

8. **Focus Groups or Committee of the Whole**

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

b. Synthesize the information and data analyzed.

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

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

\textbf{Self-Check Questions}

- Was the analysis of the SEP program done in relation to the accomplishment of the major student learner needs, the learner outcomes, academic standards, and the criteria concepts?
- Was the accuracy of the findings discussed and supported by evidence?
- Did discussion occur about how the findings relate to supporting the learning needs of all students and how the evidence may have changed the identified major student learner needs?
- Were evaluative responses provided for all the criteria and indicators with supporting evidence? (How effective? What has been the impact on student learning?)
- Are strengths and prioritized areas for growth reasonable based on the aligned findings and evidence?
Task 4: Summarize identified major student learner needs based on profile and Focus Group analysis and findings

Based on the discussion, analysis and evaluation of the program through the Focus Group work, what are the major student learner needs?

Product
Task 4: Self-Study Report: Chapter IV: Summary of Identified Major Student Learner Needs based on Student/Community Profile and Focus Group Findings

Participants
- Leadership/Management
- All Stakeholders, i.e., Committee of the Whole or SEP Focus Groups.

Procedures
1. Leadership/Management and Relevant Stakeholders:
   a. Determine if the preliminary major student learner needs need to be changed or modified based on the Focus Group findings prior to updating the SEP action plan. Make appropriate changes in the student learner needs, if applicable.
   b. Provide a summary confirming the identified student learner needs based on the profile and the Focus Group findings.
   c. Generate a table for the three criteria categories (3 columns and 3 rows) of all the strengths, growth areas and next steps from all the criteria categories.
   d. Determine themes or strands that emerge from all the strengths and growth areas listed in the table. Provide a summary of these themes for use in revising the SEP action plan (Task 5).
   e. Discuss how these themes or strands inform what strategies and activities are needed to ensure the identified major student learner needs are being addressed.

✅ Self-Check Questions
- Have all the certificated staff members and other stakeholders discussed the progress report, the profile, the draft summary of the data implications, the preliminary two to three major student learner needs, and the findings from the Focus Groups using the table?
- Has the SEP obtained input from all members of the SEP community as the implications and identification of the major student learner needs are determined based on the data and progress?
- Has there been discussion of the relationship of the two to three major student learner needs to the SEP learner outcomes?
- Is there consensus on the identified major student learner needs and the major themes or strands determined from the strengths and growth areas?
Task 5: Revise the SEP action plan; define growth targets for student groups and SEP goals; review and revise as necessary the established ongoing follow-up process to monitor implementation and accomplishment of the SEP action plan

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

Product

- Self-Study Report
- Chapter V: “SEP Action Plan”

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

B. State any additional specific strategies to be used by staff within each subject area/support program to support sections of the SEP action plan.
   This includes activities in subject areas related to strengthening a standards-based approach in support of student achievement based on both academic standards and the learning results (optional).

C. Describe the SEP’s overall follow-up process for monitoring the implementation of the SEP action plan and continuous program improvement process.

⇒ Note: the SC submits the self-study report after final Leadership/Management review.

The SC distributes the report later than six weeks prior to the visit to the following:

- ACS WASC in a single pdf or Word document and reference and support materials via the Self-Study Action Card on the Reviews/Visits page in the School Portal (acswasc.force.com/schoolportal/s/reviews). The visiting committee will be given access to download it from the Member Portal.
- Staff member(s) and other stakeholders.
Participants

Leadership/Management
All Stakeholders via Committee of the Whole, Home and/or SEP Focus Groups.

Procedures

1. Review the Focus Group summaries.
2. Use the table of all the strengths, growth areas for continuous improvement, and proposed next steps from each of the three categories (prepared for Task 4).
3. Review the current SEP action plan and decide upon appropriate modifications based on the resulting themes emerging from the self-study.
4. Synthesize or incorporate the identified growth areas for continuous improvement into plan.
5. Ensure that the goals are student-focused.
6. Ensure that measurable outcomes have been established for each priority major student learner need, related schoolwide learner outcome(s), and student group priorities, as appropriate.
7. Gather feedback, gain consensus, ensure commitment from all stakeholders and required approvals.
8. Establish process to monitor student learning based on the major student learner needs, the learner outcomes, academic standards, and progress on each SEP action plan section (i.e., annual progress report to all stakeholders, the governing authority, and advisory groups).
9. Describe the SEPs overall follow-up process for monitoring the implementation of the SEP action plan and the process for continuous improvement. Provide an annual progress report to all stakeholders and/or advisory groups, and/or the governing authority. See “The Follow-up: Making Headway” section of this manual.

Self-Check Questions

- Is the SEP action plan organized around growth targets and benchmarks for all appropriate student groups?
- Do the SEP action plan sections address the learner needs of students as identified in the student/community profile?
- Has the SEP integrated other initiatives to create one single SEP action plan?
- Are resources dedicated to each growth target as needed?
- Is there an effective process in place to integrate the visiting committee suggestions into the action plan after the visit?
- Is there a sound follow-up process that will be used to monitor the accomplishment of the SEP action plan and modify as needed?
Tools:
ACS WASC SEP Criteria with Indicators
ACS WASC SEP Tools: Criteria with Indicators, Evidence to Analyze and Examine, and Prompts

This section contains tools to assist a school in collecting and analyzing data as it determines the effectiveness of its program and operations in relation to student learning, including analysis of the program and operations in relation to the identified major student learner needs.

A self-study report template is available and can be found on the ACS WASC website in Microsoft Word. The Tools section of this manual correlates directly to Chapter III of the self-study report.

The tools are organized by the three categories of criteria.

Category A: Organization for Student Learning
Category B: Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment
Category C: Support for Student Personal and Academic Growth

In this analysis and evaluation using the ACS WASC SEP criteria, indicators, and analytical prompts.

To accomplish this, use these basic directions (Task 3):

**Home/Focus Group Work:** Based on the ACS WASC SEP criteria in each category:

1. Review what currently exists based on the ACS WASC SEP criteria and indicators.
2. Evaluate the current program’s effectiveness based on the ACS WASC SEP criteria and indicators. Use the analytical prompts to summarize the findings and evidence.
   - **Note:** Observable evidence includes a) examination of student work, b) observations of students engaged in learning and other aspects of the school program, c) student interviews, d) examination of hard data and information, and e) other observations/ interviews/discussions.

   Include findings and evidence for each criterion within Categories A–C will form the basis of Chapter III of the Self-Study report.

4. Develop an overall list of strengths and growth areas for each of the three categories that will be used in Tasks 4 and 5.
ACS WASC Supplementary Education Program (SEP) Criteria

Category A:
Organization for Student Learning

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

A1. Prompt: Evaluate the school's effectiveness in addressing the criterion and each of the indicators below; include supporting evidence.

Indicators

A1.1. Vision and Mission
Indicator: The written mission and vision (purpose) reflects the beliefs and philosophy of the SEP and its constituency.

A1.2. Purpose, SEP Learner Outcomes, and Profile Data
Indicator: The student/community profile data has impacted the development of the SEP’s vision and mission and SEP learner outcomes and identified future global competencies to strengthen the program.

A1.3. Consistency of Purpose, Program and SEP Learner Outcomes
Indicator: There is consistency between the SEP purpose, the SEP learner outcomes, and the SEP program.

A1.4. Communication about Vision, Mission, and SEP Learner Outcomes
Indicator: The SEP’s means to publicize the vision, mission, and SEP learner outcomes to the students, parents and other member(s) of the SEP community is effective.

A1.5. Ongoing Review/Revision
Indicator: The SEP’s process for regular review/revision of the SEP purpose and the SEP learner outcomes based on current and future learner needs and other local/global trends/conditions is effective.
A2. ACS WASC SEP Governance/Management Criterion: The program has a clear governance/management structure with transparent roles and responsibilities designed to ensure long-term success and accountability.

A2. Prompt: Evaluate the school’s effectiveness in addressing the criterion and each of the indicators below; include supporting evidence.

Indicators

A2.1. Clear and Effective Policies and Procedures

Indicator: There is clarity and effectiveness of roles, responsibilities, policies and procedures with regard to the selection, composition and specific duties of the governing/management authority.

A2.2. Relationship of Policies

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

A2.3. Involvement of Governing/Management Authority

Indicator: The governing/management authority’s involvement in the regular review and refinement of the SEP’s vision, mission and SEP learner outcomes and communication with the SEP community and educational partners is effective. The governing/management authority uses a variety of strategies to remain current in research-based knowledge about effective SEPs.

A2.4. Relationship to Professional Staff

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

A2.5. Governing/Management Authority’s Evaluation/Monitoring Procedures

Indicator: There are clear and effective evaluation and monitoring procedures carried out by the governing/management authority, including the review of student performance, overall SEP programs and operations, organizational goals and the fiscal health of the SEP.

A2.6. Complaint and Conflict Resolution Procedures

Indicator: The established governing/management authority/SEP’s complaint and conflict resolution procedures as they apply to the SEP’s stakeholders and educational partners are effective.
A3. ACS WASC SEP Leadership and Staff Criterion: The SEP leadership is accountable to the program’s management/governance body and is responsible for setting and meeting the operational goals in support of the program’s mission and vision statements. The SEP leadership and staff, including teachers of record, are qualified for their assigned responsibilities, are committed to the SEP’s purpose and engage in ongoing professional development that promotes student learning.

A3. Prompt: Evaluate the school’s effectiveness in addressing the criterion and each of the indicators below; include supporting evidence.

Indicators

A3.1. Qualifications and Involvement of Staff
Indicator: There are SEP leadership’s processes and procedures for ensuring staff are qualified; staff are involved in shared responsibility, collaborative structures and actions, and accountability to focus continuous improvement of teaching and learning that supports student learning.

A3.2. Maximum Use of Staff Expertise
Indicator: The SEP’s process to assign staff member(s) and provide appropriate orientation for all assignments, including online instruction, so that the expertise of the staff member(s) is maximized in relation to impact on quality student learning is effective.

A3.3. Defined Responsibilities, Practices, etc.
Indicator: There is clarity and understanding by administration and faculty of the SEP’s administrator and faculty written policies, charts, and handbooks that define responsibilities, operational practices, decision-making processes, and relationships of leadership and staff.

A3.4. Existing Structures and Processes
Indicator: The SEP’s existing structures and processes for goal setting, implementation of goals, internal communication, and conflict resolution are effective. The SEP leadership’s regular review of the existing processes to determine the degree to which actions of the leadership and staff focus on successful student learning is effective.

A3.5. Supervision and Evaluation
Indicator: The SEP’s implementation of supervision and evaluation procedures in order to promote professional growth of staff, including for online professional staff the technological competencies and use of technology within the curriculum so they fulfill the requirements for quality student-teacher interaction are effective.

A3.6. Professional Development and Learning
Indicator: The SEP leadership’s support for professional development/learning to facilitate all students achieving the expected learner outcomes and program goals is effective. There are effective processes to assess the effect of professional development and coaching on teacher practice and student performance.
A4. ACS WASC SEP Environment Criterion: The SEP online program/courses’ staff understand the SEP’s purpose, set high expectations for students, facilitate active learning, and demonstrate respect for differences, in a trusting, caring, and professional learning environment.

A4. Prompt: Evaluate the school’s effectiveness in addressing the criterion and each of the indicators below; include supporting evidence.

Indicators

A4.1. Caring, Concern and High Expectations
Indicator: The SEP demonstrates caring, concern, and high expectations for students aligned with the SEP program and goals, and fosters student achievement and success in a safe and orderly way, including internet safety guidelines.

A4.2. Mutual Respect and Communication
Indicator: Mutual respect and effective communication among and between staff, students, and parents exist and are encouraged.

A4.3. Teacher Support and Encouragement
Indicator: The level of support and professionalism for teachers encourages the use of innovative approaches to enhance student learning.
A5. ACS WASC SEP Continuous Improvement Process Criterion: The SEP leadership takes a comprehensive and integrated approach to ensuring excellent teaching for students that facilitates continuous improvement which (a) is driven by the SEP plan to reflect upon and improve organizational effectiveness, (b) has SEP community support and involvement, including management or advisory board, (c) effectively guides the work of the SEP, and (d) provides for accountability through monitoring of the SEP action plan.

A5. Prompt: Evaluate the school’s effectiveness in addressing the criterion and each of the indicators below; include supporting evidence.

Indicators

A5.1. SEP Action Plan Correlated to Student Learning
Indicator: The degree to which the SEP’s action plan is directly correlated to the analysis of student achievement data, learner needs and outcomes and organizational effectiveness in meeting student learner needs. There is correlation between allocation of time/fiscal/personnel/material resources and the implementation, monitoring, and accomplishing of the SEP action plan.

A5.2. Broad-Based and Collaborative
Indicator: The SEP planning process ensures that it is broad-based, collaborative and fosters the commitment of the stakeholders, including the staff, students, and parents.

A5.3. Systems Alignment
Indicator: The evidence within the SEP supports alignment of systems in areas such as professional goals, teacher evaluation, and action planning for the purpose of continuous improvement of the SEP.
A6. ACS WASC SEP Resources and Planning Criterion: The SEP plans for and expends financial and material resources using sound business practices to accomplish the SEP’s mission, vision and learner outcomes. The SEP engages in ongoing planning to address learner needs and curriculum, technology, academic support, professional development, and fiscal viability of the program.

A6. Prompt: Evaluate the school's effectiveness in addressing the criterion and each of the indicators below; include supporting evidence.

Indicators

Indicator: The SEP’s transparent processes to develop, implement and monitor an annual budget and audit, and at all times use quality business and accounting practices are effective.

A6.2. Qualified Staff
Indicator: Resources are available to enable the hiring, nurturing, and ongoing professional development of a qualified staff for all programs.

A6.3. Instructional Technology and Materials
Indicator: The policies and procedures for acquiring, maintaining and updating technology and instructional materials are efficient and communicated by leadership to staff and other constituents.

A6.4. Facilities, if applicable
Indicator: The facilities are adequate, safe, functional and well-maintained and support the SEP mission, desired learner goals, and educational program.

A6.5. Enrollment Policies and Processes
Indicator: The information about enrollment requirements, policies and procedures are effective, transparent and communicated with relevant staff, students and constituents.

A6.6. Partnerships and Marketing Strategies
Indicator: The marketing strategies and/or business plans to support the implementation of the program and the development of relevant partnerships to help guide student success are effective.
ACS WASC SEP Category A. Organization for Student Learning: Synthesize Strengths and Growth Areas

Prioritize and list the strengths and growth areas for the criteria and indicators in Category A.*

### Areas of Strength

1. 
2. 
3. 
4. ...

### Areas of Growth

1. 
2. 
3. 
4. ...

- List preliminary major student learner needs (for all students and student groups) from Chapter II (student/community profile)
- List any additional identified student learner needs that resulted from the Focus Group or the Committee of the Whole analyses.
- In order to have a greater impact on identified major student learner needs, use the strengths and growth areas above to
  - Analyze what areas within the SEP action plan need to be addressed
  - Identify important next steps within the SEP action plan.

*The summary information will be used for Tasks 4 and 5.
Category B: Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

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

B1. Prompt: Evaluate the school’s effectiveness in addressing the criterion and each of the indicators below; include supporting evidence.

Indicators

B1.1. Rigorous, Relevant, Coherent Curriculum
Indicator: The SEP's curriculum for its rigor, relevancy, and coherency after evaluation of policies regarding course completion, credits, grading policies, homework, use of technology, accessibility for all students, and the SEP’s policy to maintain curricular integrity, reliability, and security are effective.

B1.2. Academic Standards
Indicator: The SEP provides a research-based, comprehensive and sequential curriculum that is articulated within and across grade levels for the improvement of programs, learning, and teaching.

B1.3. Coherence and Alignment
Indicator: There is clarity and alignment between the actual concepts and skills taught, the academic standards, and the SEP learner outcomes.

B1.4. Student Understanding of Curriculum and Learner Outcomes
Indicator: The examination of representative samples of student work and snapshots of student engagement in learning demonstrate accomplishment of the SEP learner outcomes and the implementation of a standards-based curriculum.

B1.5. Curricular Review, Revision, and Evaluation
Indicator: The processes to collaboratively review and evaluate SEP’s curriculum and alignment with credits, grading policies, and homework policy are effective.
B2. ACS WASC SEP Instruction Criterion: The professional staff (a) uses research-based knowledge about teaching and learning, and (b) designs and implements a variety of learning experiences that actively engage students at a high level of learning consistent with the SEP’s purpose and SEP’s learner outcomes.

B2. Prompt: Evaluate the school’s effectiveness in addressing the criterion and each of the indicators below; include supporting evidence.

Indicators

B2.1. Research-based Knowledge

Indicator: The leadership and teachers use a variety of approaches to remain current in research-based professional knowledge and apply the knowledge to improve teaching and learning, including instructional technology expertise. All students regardless of background and ability are actively involved in the learning that is based on the SEP learner outcomes and academic standards.

B2.2. Student Needs and Understanding Learning Expectations

Indicator: The teachers differentiate instruction to meet student needs and ensure students know the standards and expected performance levels for each area of study. The SEP provides evidence that students learn academic standards and the SEP learner outcomes through defined performance indicators.

B2.3. Challenging and Varied Instructional Strategies —Teacher Use

Indicator: The teachers strengthen student understanding and achievement of the learning outcomes through the use of a variety of instructional strategies selected on the basis of the learning purpose(s). Teachers effectively engage students at a high level of learning through direct instruction and other instructional strategies.

B2.4. Challenging Learning Experiences — Student Demonstration

Indicator: The extent to which students working and their work demonstrate critical and creative thinking, problem solving, knowledge attainment, and application of skills. Staff review online student work and communications to determine the degree to which students are analyzing, comprehending and reaching learning outcomes.

B2.5. Instructional Technology Integration

Indicator: The teachers systematically integrate technology within the SEP so that all students develop a wide range of technological skills relevant to the SEP’s learner outcomes.

B2.6. Professional Collaboration and Professional Development

Indicator: The leadership and teachers’ use of collaborative strategies to examine instructional design and student work to improve learning and teaching, and increase student demonstrations of critical thinking, problem solving, knowledge, and application is effective. Ongoing professional development to improve learning and teaching is in place including strategies to assess the impact of professional development on student success.
B3. ACS WASC SEP Assessment Criterion: Assessments are frequently used by teachers and students and integrated into the teaching/learning process. The assessment results are the basis for (a) measurement of each student’s progress toward SEP learner outcomes and academic standards, (b) regular evaluation and improvement of curriculum and instructional approaches, and (c) allocation of resources.

B3. Prompt: Evaluate the school’s effectiveness in addressing the criterion and each of the indicators below; include supporting evidence.

Indicators

B3.1. Appropriate Assessment Strategies
Indicator: The extent to which teachers regularly use appropriate assessment strategies to measure student progress to increase knowledge or skills, such as critical thinking and communication skills. Assessment results are analyzed, disaggregated, and reported to students, parents/guardians, educational partners and the SEP community.

B3.2. Basis for Determination of Performance Levels
Indicator: The impact and effectiveness of the basis upon which students’ grades and their growth and performance levels are determined and use of information to strengthen success of all students. The processes for teachers to monitor student progress over time and provide specific and timely student feedback to guide assessment strategies are effective.

Additional Online Instruction Indicators:

- The determination if a student is prepared to advance to the next unit, course, or grade level is effective. Course mastery is determined and the “steps” or “gates” that are in place to prevent students from proceeding to the next unit if mastery has not been demonstrated are evaluated.
- The procedures for grading student work electronically and/or individually by the teachers are effective.
- The teachers are effective in ensuring academic integrity and determining that students are doing their own work in the online environment. The results for assessments are used in decisions about student achievement and advancement and improving the instructional program are evaluated.

B3.3. Demonstration of Student Achievement-Monitoring Student Growth
Indicator: Students working and their work demonstrate critical and creative thinking, problem solving, knowledge attainment, and application of skills. Staff review online student work and communications to determine the degree to which students are analyzing, comprehending and reaching learning outcomes.

B3.4. Modification/Decisions based on Assessment Data
Indicator: The assessment data informs changes and decisions about SEP curriculum, instruction, professional development activities, and resource allocations. The teacher strategies used, individually and collectively, to differentiate instruction and revise the curriculum as a result of student assessments are effective.
ACS WASC SEP Category B. Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment: Synthesize Strengths and Growth Areas

Prioritize and list the strengths and growth areas for the criteria and indicators in Category B.*

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- List preliminary major student learner needs (for all students and student groups) from Chapter II (student/community profile)
- List any additional identified student learner needs that resulted from the Focus Group or the Committee of the Whole analyses.
- In order to have a greater impact on identified major student learner needs, use the strengths and growth areas above to
  - Analyze what areas within the SEP action plan need to be addressed
  - Identify important next steps within the SEP action plan.

*The summary information will be used for Tasks 4 and 5.
Category C: Support for Student Personal and Academic Growth

C1. ACS WASC SEP Student and Parent/Guardian Support Criterion: SEP leadership implements student and parent/guardian support services to address the differentiated needs of learners. Learning resources and related instructional materials are available to support and enrich learning and provide learners with multiple, engaging learning paths as appropriate.

C1. Prompt: Evaluate the school’s effectiveness in addressing the criterion and each of the indicators below; include supporting evidence.

Indicators

C1.1. Academic Growth
Indicator: The SEP communicates frequently with students about how content and learning activities meet student needs and promote the achievement of the learner outcomes and course/program completion expectations, and how the student is progressing.

C1.2. Adequate Personalized Support
Indicator: The SEP implements strategies and processes for the ongoing involvement of and support to students and parents/guardians in the teaching and learning processes.

C1.3. SEP Support Systems
Indicator: The SEP learning management system and related learning resources provide academic support and problem solving guidance to students and parents/guardians.
C2. ACS WASC SEP Multi-tiered Support Criterion: All students receive appropriate academic and multi-tiered support to ensure student learning and success. Educational and community partners provide additional support services as needed to support student academic success.

C2. Prompt: Evaluate the school’s effectiveness in addressing the criterion and each of the indicators below; include supporting evidence.

Indicators

C2.1. Strategies for Personalized Learning and Achievement
Indicator: The SEP leadership and staff use a variety of strategies to develop personalized learning approaches and differentiated instruction so that students reach the SEP’s learner outcomes, complete related courses of study and communicate progress in timely and relevant ways.

C2.2. Multi-tiered Support Strategies
Indicator: The SEP and educational partners provide multi-tiered approaches to student support focused on increasing success and achievement.

C2.3. Student Perceptions
Indicator: The SEP interviews or surveys students to gather and analyze data on what multi-tiered support services help students achieve and what strategies need to be strengthened.
ACS WASC SEP Category C. Support for Student Personal and Academic Growth: Synthesize Strengths and Growth Areas

Prioritize and list the strengths and growth areas for the criteria and indicators in Category C.*

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- List preliminary major student learner needs (for all students and student groups) from Chapter II (student/community profile)
- List any additional identified student learner needs that resulted from the Focus Group or the Committee of the Whole analyses.
- In order to have a greater impact on identified major student learner needs, use the strengths and growth areas above to
  - Analyze what areas within the SEP action plan need to be addressed
  - Identify important next steps within the SEP action plan.

*The summary information will be used for Tasks 4 and 5.
The Visit
SEP Self-Study Coordinator
Visit Preparation Checklist

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

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

2. SC makes lodging and other arrangements for the visiting committee.
   The SC arranges lodging, if necessary, with prior approval and adequate work space for the visiting committee. There should be an area for exhibit materials that support the self-study in the work space or make it available online. Word processing, printing, copy services, technical, and clerical support should be made available to the visiting committee if needed.
   ➔ Note: SEPs directly reimburse visiting committee member(s) for expenses incurred during the previsit and the self-study visit. This includes meals, mileage, and other accreditation visit-related expenses. Lodging should be arranged and directly paid for by the SEP.

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

✓ Self-Check Questions
   Have copies of the self-study report been submitted to the appropriate recipients?

   The SC submits the self-study report after final Leadership/Management review no later than six weeks prior to the visit:
   - ACS WASC in a single pdf or Word document and reference and support materials via the Self-Study Action Cards on the Reviews/Visits page in the School Portal (acswasc.force.com/schoolportal/s/reviews). The Visiting Committee will be given access to download it from the Member Portal.
   - Staff member(s) and other stakeholders.
4. **During the month prior to the visit, the SC and the Leadership/Management continue discussion of the implementation of the SEP action plan.**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

   **Self-Check Questions**
   Has the final visiting committee report and supporting evidence been distributed to the appropriate recipients after the visit?
8. After the visit, the SC facilitates the integration of the narrative suggestions and critical areas for follow-up (growth areas for continuous improvement) left by the visiting committee in the report into a modified SEP action plan.

**Self-Check Questions**

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

By June 1 (January 31 for fall visits), the SEP should submit the modified SEP action plan to:

- Staff member(s) and other stakeholders.

- The Self-Study Coordinator Post-Visit Checklist can be found on page 97.
- The Coordinator Checklists can be found on the ACS WASC website.
Visiting Committee Chairperson Checklist

Previsit Preparation

___1.  Attend ACS WASC chair training.

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

___3.  Review the expectations of the self-study:

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

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

3.  The analysis of data about students and student achievement

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

___9.  Communicate with the SEP about the following issues:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

h. Exhibit of representative evidence for the visiting committee
○ How will exhibit materials that reflect the evidence analyzed in the self-study be organized for the visiting committee, i.e., in classrooms, the visiting committee workroom, and/or electronically?
○ Will the evidence reflect:
  – A linkage to learner outcomes, academic standards, and ACS WASC SEP criteria
  – A linkage to identified major student learner needs, “identified growth areas,” and SEP action plan sections
  – All students.
○ Will the visiting committee be provided a general list of available evidence?
○ What evidence will be available prior to the visit?

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

j. Visiting committee work space at the SEP site

k. Meeting room at the SEP for visiting committee meetings

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

m. Lodging and visit arrangements.

10. Receive roster of visiting committee member(s); begin communication with member, if applicable.
  a. Send the initial letter, including the SEP description, to the member(s) electronically; confirm the member(s)’ desired contact information
b. Ask member(s) for their preferred areas of expertise and coverage during the visit

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

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

a. If the SEP needs further direct assistance

d. Progress on the report

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

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

f. Appropriate technical and clerical support.

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

a. Provide writing assignments

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

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

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

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

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

⇒ Note: The questions and tentative narrative statements should be sent to the visiting committee chair prior to the visit. The chair will create a tentative report that will be used at the initial team meeting. Some chairs use shared documents using Google Drive.

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

g. Provide the schedule for the visit.

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

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

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

c. Preparation of reference/evidence materials for visit

d. Receipt of list of reference/evidence
e. Availability and knowledge of clerical and technical support.

___14. Make final contact with visiting committee member(s), if applicable:
   a. Confirm receipt of the self-study
   b. Offer assistance with the understanding of assigned tasks and prewriting
   c. Remind member(s) to send questions and tentative writing
   d. Offer additional assistance to special visiting committee member(s)
   e. Confirm the initial meeting time
   f. Remind member(s) to take cash/credit card for expenses that will be reimbursed after visit and to keep receipts of any such expenditures.

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

___16. Plan the orientation meeting for visiting committee member(s) prior to initial meeting at the SEP, if applicable. The meeting should cover:
   a. The purpose of visit
   b. Conducting the visit in an atmosphere of collaborative and open communication
   c. Emphasis upon ACS WASC SEP criteria, the major student learner needs, and the learner outcomes and academic standards as the basis for the self-study and visit
   d. Discussion of SEP direction(s) and where SEP is with respect to the refinement of learner outcomes and academic standards
   e. Discussion of the self-study report: trends and perceptions based on the learner outcomes, academic standards, and ACS WASC SEP criteria (questions, concerns, and tentative written comments); type of verification needed
   f. Discussion of ways to gather and review evidence with emphasis upon important areas to observe, ask about, or examine based on the self-study perceptions
   g. Review of the initial meeting with the SEP staff and the overall schedule, including important strategies to use during the meetings
   h. Modeling the collaborative development of questions for the Leadership/Management meeting to ensure consensus of all visiting committee member(s)
   i. Review of the accreditation status determination and the summary for the Commission
   j. Reminder to the member(s) to keep expenses to a minimum.
The Visit:  How Do We Know Students Are Learning?  
What is the Actual Program for Students?

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

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

___3. Facilitate the visit; keep in mind the following:
   a. Maintain a positive atmosphere
   b. Keep to the task
   c. Maintain open communication and collaboration at all times
   d. Ensure that all visiting committee member(s) are active participants in the SEP committee meetings
   e. Ensure that the gathering and review of evidence occurs throughout the SEP; this includes class/program observations, interviews, examination of student work and other data, subject area/support group meetings
   f. Ensure that no area is overlooked
   g. Assist the visiting committee member(s), if applicable
   h. Ensure consensus on the critical questions for all groups based on overall visiting committee findings
   i. Avoid issues related to SEP policies or negotiations not related to ACS WASC SEP criteria
   j. Stress with the visiting committee to avoid prescription and “how we do it at our program” discussion
   k. Lead all visiting committee discussions on the findings, relating them to the accomplishment of the learner outcomes and the ACS WASC SEP criteria
   l. Coordinate the preparation of the visiting committee report.

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

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

___6. At the final meeting with the Leadership/Management, facilitate a thorough dialogue about the SEP action plan based upon the SEP and visiting committee findings in relation to the learner outcomes, academic standards, and the ACS WASC SEP criteria.
   a. Ensure the Leadership/Management has an opportunity to ask questions and clarify areas of the report
   b. Ensure that the growth areas for continuous improvement include a “who,” “what,” and “why” in terms of impact on student learning. Distinguish the
different types of growth areas for continuous improvement with an introductory stem: e.g., the visiting committee concurs with the areas already identified by the SEP
c. Point out that after the visit the Leadership/Management needs to integrate the visiting committee’s key issues and growth areas for continuous improvement into the SEP action plan
d. Work with visiting committee member(s) to discuss and investigate any issues or questions raised in the dialogue with the Leadership/Management.

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

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

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

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

___11. Coordinate the completion of the “Accreditation Status Recommendation” and the “Documentation and Justification Statement” for the Commission. Ensure:
   a. Alignment between the visiting committee report and the recommended accreditation status
   b. Member signatures are on the status recommendation sheet
   c. Brief description of the discussion and status options considered by the visiting committee
   d. A clearly stated rationale based upon factors impacting the accreditation status.

___12. Edit the final visiting committee report with the assistance of the visiting committee member(s). Ensure that all key topics of chapters are addressed.

___13. Facilitate the presentation of the visiting committee findings to the entire staff at the close of the visit. Do not imply the recommended accreditation status. Leave a draft copy of the visiting committee report with the leadership.

___14. Continually stress the importance of immediate follow-up to integrate the visiting committee narrative suggestions and critical areas for follow-up into the SEP action plan for yearly implementation and assessment.
Have the visiting committee complete the evaluation of chairperson form (optional).

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

After the Visit

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

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

Submit the: (1) Accreditation Status Recommendation, (2) Documentation and Justification Statement, and (3) visiting committee report electronically to the ACS WASC office from the Action Card in the School Portal.

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

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

Send the appropriate letters of appreciation.

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

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

Previsit Preparation

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

___2. Attend ACS WASC member training.


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

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

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

___7. After receiving the self-study report, complete the previsit preparation:
   a. Review the criteria with respect to the analysis of the self-study report; study other pertinent materials (e.g., academic standards)
   b. Compare the SEP’s findings to the concepts of the criteria, the major student learner needs, and the learner outcomes; critique the SEP action plan.
   To what extent:
• Do the SEP’s findings and supporting evidence provide a sound basis for
determining the effectiveness of the SEP’s programs based on the criteria
concepts?
• Was the analysis of the SEP program done in relation to the major student
learner needs, the learner outcomes, the academic standards, and the concepts
of the criteria?
• Does the SEP action plan address the major identified growth areas and
enhance the learning of all students as identified in the student/community
profile?
• Are the major student learner needs and the learner outcomes being addressed
through the SEP action plan?
• Is the implementation of a standards-based system being addressed through
the SEP action plan?
• Has the SEP integrated other initiatives to create one “umbrella” SEP action
plan?
• Is the action plan feasible and realistic? Are resources considered for each
SEP action plan section?
• Do the ways of assessing progress include the analysis of student learning?
• Is there sufficient program-wide commitment to the SEP action plan?
• Is there a sound follow-up process that will be used to monitor the
accomplishment of the SEP action plan?
c. Write tentative narrative statements in response to the criteria including the
relationship of the concepts of the criteria and indicators to the learner outcomes
and major student learner needs. Include questions regarding issues, concerns,
clarifications and evidence that should be pursued during the visit. Send these to
visiting committee chair prior to the visit.

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

9. Receive the final communication from the chairperson that:
   a. Offers further assistance and clarification of tasks based on the SEP schedule
   b. Confirms the initial meeting time and visit logistics
   c. Reviews how reimbursable expenses are to be handled.

10. Bring the following materials electronically or in hard copy to visit: (Note: Some
chairs might be using Google Drive so the templates and other materials are already
available for sharing online.)
   a. ACS WASC SEP Focus on Learning manual
   b. Accreditation Status Determination Worksheet
   c. Sample of visiting committee report, Documentation/Justification Statement
   d. Reference cards
   e. Self-study report
f. All notes
g. Credit card or cash to cover reimbursable expenses.

___11. Arrive on time for the initial meeting and have no other commitments during the visit.

**The Visit: How Do We Know Students Are Learning?**  
**What Is The Actual Program For Students?**

___1. Demonstrate an interest in the SEP’s welfare and express a desire to be helpful. Establish a rapport with the staff.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

___13. Make every effort to avoid involvement in issues that are not pertinent to the self-study and visit.
14. Work cooperatively with all other visiting committee member(s) as findings are discussed and decisions made.

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

16. Give feedback to all staff, noting the regular meetings with the Leadership/Management.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

24. Complete and submit the chair evaluation form.

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

26. Support and encourage the SEP in its ongoing improvement process.
Sample Schedule for Visit

The following sample schedule is provided for full self-study visits. This sample schedule should be adjusted by the SEP and the visiting committee (VC) Chair to fit the local situation. In this process, it is very important to allow enough time for extensive dialogue with the Focus Groups and the Leadership/Management; this discussion will include the examination of evidence used to determine growth needs by the stakeholders. The focus of the subject area and support staff meetings will be to understand their information and evidence that led support to the findings. The VC chairperson should be in regular communication with the leadership and self-study coordinator to discuss the progress of the visit.

Sample Schedule

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

### Title Page
- SEP Name
- City
- Dates of Visit
- Names and Titles of Visiting Committee Member(s)

### Chapter I
- Succinctly describe the SEP program, students served, and other relevant information.
- Include the SEP’s vision, mission, learner outcomes and two to three identified major student learner needs.
- Synthesize any significant changes and/or developments that have had a major impact on the SEP and/or specific programs since the last full visit.

Acceptable progress by all students toward clearly defined learner outcomes (major student learner needs), academic standards, and other institutional and/or governing authority expectations.

**Visiting Committee Rating (select one):** Highly Effective   Effective   Somewhat Effective   Ineffective

**Narrative Rationale:**

### Chapter II
- Evaluate the degree to which major student learner needs, SEP needs and critical areas for follow-up (growth areas for continuous improvement) have been addressed since the last visit through the SEP action plan.

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

**Visiting Committee Rating (select one):** Highly Effective   Effective   Somewhat Effective   Ineffective

**Narrative Rationale:**

Comment on the SEP’s self-study process with respect to the expected outcomes of the self-study.

1. The involvement and collaboration of all staff and other stakeholders to support student achievement.
2. The clarification and measurement of what all students should know, understand, and be able to do through learner outcomes and academic standards (*note the selected learner outcomes examined by the SEP*).
3. The gathering and analyzing of data about students and student achievement.
4. The assessment of the entire SEP and its impact on student learning in relation to program-wide learner outcomes, academic standards, and ACS WASC SEP criteria
5. The alignment of a long-range action plan to the SEP’s areas of need; the development and implementation of an accountability system for monitoring the accomplishment of the plan.

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

**Visiting Committee Rating (select one):** Highly Effective   Effective   Somewhat Effective   Ineffective

**Narrative Rationale:**
Chapter III: Quality of the SEP’s Program

Based on the SEP’s self-study and visiting committee findings:

- For each category of criteria, summarize the findings about the SEP’s effectiveness in addressing each of the criterion and all the indicators within each category; include supporting evidence as appropriate.
- Rate the effectiveness of each criterion and complete the narrative rationale for the rating
  - Highlight the areas of strength (if any)
  - Highlight the growth areas for continuous improvement (if any)
  - List important evidence about student learning from the self-study and the visit that supports these findings, strengths and growth areas for continuous improvement.

Note: When writing the summary for each criterion, use the indicators as a guide to ensure that all important aspects of each criterion are addressed (see the ACS WASC SEP Accreditation Status Determination Worksheet).

Chapter IV: Synthesis of Strengths and Growth Areas for Continuous Improvement

Strengths

The purpose of identifying strengths is to provide input and support for the SEP to use these strengths in their continuous improvement to ensure high-quality student learning and well-being. Synthesize areas of strengths and list numerically. Be sure that these can be documented by other sections of the report.

Growth Areas for Continuous Improvement

The purpose of supporting the SEP’s identified growth areas for continuous improvement and sharing additional growth areas is to ensure the continuous improvement for student learning and well-being encompasses the greatest student and SEP needs.

Synthesize growth areas for continuous growth and list numerically. Be sure that these can be documented by other sections of the report.

- Ensure that all Growth Areas have a “who,” “what,” and a “why” in relation to the impact on student learning
- Confirm areas already identified by the SEP in the action plan sections
- Confirm areas to be strengthened within the already identified areas
- Identify any additional areas to be added to the action plan that have been identified by the visiting committee. This includes areas related to student achievement and other profile data, the SEP program and operation, and the SEP action plan.

Chapter V: Ongoing SEP Improvement

- Include a brief summary of the SEP action plan
- Evaluate the following improvement issues:
  - The effectiveness of the SEP action plan to enhance student learning and support the identified major student learner needs
  - The level of commitment to accomplish the action plan, program-wide
  - The soundness of the follow-up process for implementing and monitoring the accomplishment of the SEP action plan.

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

Visiting Committee Rating (select one): Highly Effective Effective Somewhat Effective Ineffective

Narrative Rationale:
| The capacity to implement and monitor the SEP action plan. |
| Visiting Committee Rating (select one): Highly Effective  Effective  Somewhat Effective  Ineffective |
| Narrative Rationale: |
Accreditation Status Determination

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- Addressed the areas for continuous improvement throughout the SEP action plan
- Made appropriate progress on the implementation of the SEP action plan
- Improved student achievement relative to the SEP learner outcomes and the academic standards.

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

* No changes have been made to the ACS WASC initial visit process.
Six-Year Accreditation Status with a Mid-cycle Progress Report and **Two-Day Visit**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

NOTE: The Commission reserves the right to grant accreditation status other than those above, including a recommendation for a full self-study at any time. Such action will follow a Commission review of the visiting committee report. In the event of a formal appeal, this document will be provided to the SEP’s chief administrator.
ACS WASC Accreditation Status Timeline

* A special visit and/or report may be required at any time in the accreditation cycle.
** Probationary accreditation status may be appended.
Please complete the following information:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chair Name</th>
<th>Name and City of School Visited</th>
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<td>Chair’s Work Phone</td>
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Provide a brief narrative, which summarizes the visiting committee’s rationale for the recommended status: *(If there is an unresolved minority opinion please indicate and explain.)*

- Status options seriously considered
- List the reasons for the status recommended and provide compelling evidence that supports the visiting committee recommendation

In the comments reflect upon the following:
- The visiting committee’s discussion for each status option considered
- The degree to which students are learning
- Important identified strengths and growth areas
- The capacity of the school to implement and monitor the action plan.

**Status Options Considered**

Enter text here

**Accreditation Status Recommendation Rationale (provide compelling evidence):**

Enter text here
**Accreditation Status Factors Summary**

Transfer the ratings from the visiting committee report.

- **Highly Effective**: The results of the self-study and the visit provide evidence that this factor has had a high degree of impact on student learning, the school’s program and the school’s operation.
- **Effective**: The results of the self-study and the visit provide evidence that this factor has had a satisfactory level of impact on student learning, the SEP’s program, and the SEP’s operation.
- **Somewhat Effective**: The results of the self-study and the visit provide evidence that this factor has had a limited impact on student learning, the SEP’s program, and the SEP’s operation.
- **Ineffective**: The results of the self-study and the visit provide evidence that this factor has had little or no impact on student learning, the SEP’s program, and the SEP’s operation.

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<tr>
<th>Accreditation Status Factors for ACS WASC SEP Criteria</th>
<th>Highly Effective</th>
<th>Effective</th>
<th>Somewhat Effective</th>
<th>Ineffective</th>
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<td>The use of prior accreditation findings and other pertinent data to ensure high achievement of all students and drive improvement.</td>
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<td>Assessment (B3)</td>
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<td>Student and Parent/Guardian Support (C1)</td>
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<td>Multi-tiered Support (C2)</td>
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<td>Acceptable Progress by All Students</td>
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<td>Alignment of a long-range SEP Action Plan Aligned to Areas of Greatest Need</td>
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<td>Capacity to Implement and Monitor SEP Action Plan</td>
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The Follow-up: Making Headway
SEP Self-Study Coordinator
Post-Visit Checklist

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

After the visit, the self-study coordinator (SC) and Leadership/Management meet immediately to review the visiting committee report and begin the follow-up process.

The Leadership/Management coordinates the refining and implementation of the action steps for each section of the SEP action plan. The narrative suggestions and critical areas for follow-up left by the visiting committee should be integrated into the SEP action plan.

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

Some SEPs may continue to use the Focus Groups as “change agent” committees in the follow-up process. The Leadership/Management involves the total staff in annual assessment of progress, including data analysis about student learning in relation to learner outcomes and academic standards; this will result in modifications annually of the SEP action plan, including annual executive approval, if applicable. If the SEP annually reviews its plan and progress, the reports generated will comprise the major portion of the next self-study.

☑️ **Self-Check Questions**

Has the modified SEP action plan been submitted?

The modified SEP action plan should be submitted to ACS WASC via the Action Card on the Reviews/Visits page in the School Portal (acswasc.force.com/schoolportal/s/reviews).

- The Coordinator Checklists can be found on the ACS WASC website at www.acswasc.org.
ACS WASC Accreditation Process: Ongoing Improvement

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

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

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

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

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

3. The analysis of data about students and student achievement

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

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