

ACS WASC VISITING COMMITTEE CHAIR EXPECTATIONS 2020-2021

Full Visits: In-Person and Blended, Virtual Visits

(Keeper of the Vision, Coach, Organizer)

How well are all students learning and achieving?

Is the school doing everything possible to support high achievement for all students?

How is the school demonstrating continuous improvement that focuses on the impact on high quality student learning?

The ACS WASC Guiding Principles provide the structure for a school's continuous improvement and the evaluation of the results. The ACS WASC accreditation process empowers schools to:

- Ensure that there is a culture of involvement and collaboration of leadership, staff, students, teachers, parents, and other stakeholders
- Ensure there is a culture that nurtures and supports the well-being of all students
- Demonstrate through its program there is evidence that its vision, mission and schoolwide learner outcomes are accomplished by students
- Evaluate students' achievement of the schoolwide learner outcomes and the academic standards
- Use multiple ways to analyze data to demonstrate student achievement, including student and staff perceptions/interviews, examining student work, and observing students engaged in learning
- Evaluate its program effectiveness in relation to 1) its impact on student learning based on schoolwide learner outcomes, student learner needs, and academic standards; and 2) meeting an acceptable level of quality in accordance with the ACS WASC criteria
- Align its prior and current prioritized findings to the schoolwide action plan focusing on areas of greatest student and therefore teacher and school needs
- Implement and monitor the ongoing improvement results and the impact on student learning.

Expectations for All Virtual or Blended Visits:

- *Every care must be taken to ensure that the process and result will be as rigorous and thorough as an onsite visit.*
- *Based on the WASC research-based criteria/indicators, the virtual visit focuses on continuous school improvement and the progress related to high quality learning and well-being for all students.*
- *Video, audio and connectivity quality must be sufficient to allow for good communication – both recorded and live.*

Virtual Previsit Preparation

NOTE: Address the points listed under this section for an in-person visit but adapt based on the inserted guidelines to assist with adjustments for virtual previsit work.

Overview: A virtual previsit with the Visiting Committee chair and the school leadership is scheduled to discuss the key expectations and logistics for a successful virtual visit using the chair expectations and also the visiting committee chair checklist in the FOL manual. Integral to this prework will be the development of a workable schedule by the school leadership and the visiting committee chair, using the in-person schedule as a reference that should be adjusted as needed.

Previsit preparation also includes addressing all the work with the visiting committee members prior to the visit.

Previsit Preparation: Expectations (correlated with the Visiting Committee Chair Checklist within the Focus on Learning manuals)

Personal Preparation

- _____ Participate in training.
- _____ Understand the school's self-study process as outlined in the self-study manual and adapted by the school based on the guiding principles.
- _____ Know the ACS WASC or ACS WASC/_____ criteria/indicators, expectations of a quality self-study and accreditation status options.

Work with School

- _____ Maintain continual communication with the chief administrator and the self-study coordinator via phone, email and other means, such as Skype or Zoom.
- _____ Understand the school's culture, vision, mission, schoolwide learner outcomes and review past reports, action plans, etc. Obtain current schoolwide action plan, prior pertinent reports; view website and associated websites, such as CDE and HODOE (if a public school review district LCAP in CA, HI State Strategic Plan, Guam State Strategic Plan and other data).
- _____ Conduct a previsit. (*Exception: Hawaii, Pacific Islands, Asia and other parts of the world*)

Virtual Previsit Conversation:

NOTE: Although the postponed schools were not required to update their self-study report, the school will be expected to share what has been since the report was completed with supporting information; this would include the impact of online learning for the students and other issues as a result of the COVID-19 Pandemic. The school should ensure the self-study and all supporting evidence and documentation is available for the visiting committee prior to the visit.

After review of the school's student/community profile and supporting documentation, prior to the visit the visiting committee chair may request additional information related

to *student wellness and safety standards* due to the nature of the virtual visit. Examples of documentation requested prior to the virtual visit may be the school's (district) Safety Plan and protocols, documentation of dates of annual inspections, drills, audits, water testing; and Fire Marshall certificate.

*Refer to the attached **Guidelines for Schools Hosting a Virtual Visit.***

In addition, address the following:

Logistics

- _____ Ensure the school team understands the technological needs required for a virtual visit and they have the necessary bandwidth and connectivity for a successful visit.
- _____ Provide guidance and direction on the technology needs for the virtual visit and schedule time for the school leadership and team to do a walkthrough with the technology 1-2 weeks before the scheduled visit.
- _____ Discuss the school's connectivity and bandwidth capacity to ensure the virtual visit will be successful.
- _____ Have the school identify the technology support personnel with whom the chair and visiting committee will work
- _____ Discuss the recording devices available (video recording, camera, tablet/iPAD/Smartphone) and the wireless support necessary to live stream the school in action during the virtual visit.
- _____ Discuss the school's online conferencing space that allows for small groups to participate in meetings (e.g. Zoom, Skype, Google Meetings or similar) including individual stations (or laptops) available.
- _____ Discuss the available virtual conferencing capacity to allow for stakeholder groups to participate in the virtual visit.
- _____ Discuss how all participants in a meeting will be identified prior to and during the meeting.

Classroom Observations and Support Needed for Virtual Visits:

- _____ Clarify the use of a school tablet/iPad/smartphone to provide a wider angle of classrooms
- _____ Identify school personnel needed to facilitate technology use during classroom observations and guide the classroom visits.
- _____ Discuss the number of classroom visits needed depending on the size of the school and the priorities of visit so that the chair and member may visit different classes. Be conscious of the number and type of classroom observation samples for each major subject area, grade level, program, groups of students so the virtual visits provide a quality representation of the school.

- _____ Cover all points outlined in FOL, Visit, Chair Checklist #9 a.–m or #8 a.–m, Hawaii). These are details of the FOL process as well as organizational issues.
 - Calendar/timeline for self-study process
 - Orientation/training and self-study process involving all stakeholders
 - Organization of committees and membership—all involved
 - Student/Community profile—findings (including CDE California School Dashboard and Hawaii Strive Hi data)
 - Student/Community Profile Summary: Implications, Major Student Learner Needs, Important Questions
 - Clarification of vision, mission and schoolwide learner outcomes
 - Significant changes and progress since prior self-study
 - Analysis/synthesis of findings about school program and supporting evidence based on ACS WASC criteria/ indicators and prompts
 - Alignment of strengths and growth areas for each criteria category
 - Alignment of updated schoolwide action plan (e.g., schoolwide action plan/SPSA aligned with LCAP for CDE schools, Three-Year Academic Plan for HDOE schools aligned with the Hawaii Strategic Plan).
- _____ Critique all draft goals of report: student/community profile, including summary of data implications; schoolwide progress since last visit; findings based on criteria, e.g., focus group summaries, and draft updated schoolwide action plan.
- _____ Ensure that the major student learner needs and important questions are addressed throughout the analysis of the school’s program based on the criteria areas and addressed in the schoolwide action plan.
- _____ Provide timely feedback to school on all draft goals well ahead of visit.
- _____ Ensure the school understands that schoolwide learner outcomes complement academic standards and emanate from the school’s vision, mission and current and future learning needs of the students. (Through what staff members teach and how they involve students in learning and the school program, the schoolwide learner outcomes are accomplished.)
- _____ Clarify how the evidence will be organized and provided prior to the visit electronically, e.g., hyperlink or dropbox. Determine what additional evidence would be available during the visit.
- _____ Address logistics (visiting committee work space, meeting room, technology, housing, parking, name tags, enlarged school master schedule, staff roster, etc.)
Ask school about school/district reimbursement guidelines to avoid delay in reimbursement.
- _____ All deadlines for school reports must not be changed. The reports are due 6 weeks prior to the visit. Any extensions for school reports must be addressed at the ACS WASC office. If a school wants to change a visit date, ACS WASC must address and approve. The exception is a one day visit but ACS WASC must be notified.

Work with School: The Schedule

(See sample schedule in ACS WASC FOL manuals and website)

Virtual Previsit Preparation: The Schedule

_____ Develop a workable schedule and room assignments with technological and computer access. Clarify what platforms (iPad, Google, etc.) will be in place for the virtual visit.

_____ Allow at least a 15 minute break between meetings. Use breakout room features for the designated platform so two or more meetings can occur simultaneously, if needed; or use separate meeting room accounts also.

_____ ***Expected Meetings and Participants for All Visits (See sample in-person schedule and ensure the same dialog occurs during the visit in manageable ways, e.g., holding some meetings prior to the actual visit or combine some meetings)***

- Daily meetings with Leadership Team and Visiting Committee-including review of report on final day prior to modifications, especially the schoolwide strengths and the critical areas for follow-up
- Daily meetings with Principal/Head of School and Visiting Committee Chair
- Two Visiting Committee (VC) members meet with all members of each Focus Group (may have to be split into 2 meetings)
- Observing recorded videos and live streaming of a representative sample of classes, campus, science lab-(Suggestion: each member visit stratified representative sample of classes for a minimum of 90 minutes per day, 15-20 minutes per class)
- Meetings with representative parents, students, support staff, subject area staff, counselors, district and/or governing board (Suggestions: 45 minutes with VC reps; meetings of subject areas may be clustered; some may have occurred prior to the official visit dates)
- Daily synthesis meetings of the VC to debrief and come to consensus on key areas to address
- Exit meeting for all staff with oral report from VC; copy of Schoolwide Strengths and Critical Areas for Follow-up (Growth Areas for Continuous Improvement) left by VC (Completed report sent within 10 working days after end of visit)

_____ Collaboratively develop the schedule for the visit with the school. (Use Google Docs to work on the schedule, using the template provided on the ACS WASC website.)

_____ Hold separate meetings with all school groups: There must be **two** people at all meetings with the exception of the subject area/grade level or program groups. Examples include the following:

- Parents
- Students
- Support Staff
- Administrators

- All Focus Groups (1 ½ to 2 hours — hold meetings after you have observed the school in operation. There must be at least **two** people at a meeting)
 - Daily synthesis meetings of all Visiting Committee members regarding findings
 - Governing Board and/or District or Complex Area or Corporate Staff
 - Charter school authorizer
 - Subject Areas/Grade Levels or Programs (may cluster groups)
 - Other meetings based on school, e.g., coordinators of special programs such as college/career and/or counseling department
 - Other individuals or groups, such as representative professional learning communities (PLCs) or data teams.
- _____ Visit all teachers [ideal-all classes and talk to all (exceptions — extremely large schools, such as adult schools)] Use a master schedule to ensure all teachers/classes/programs have been visited.
- _____ Daily schedule collaborative Leadership Team meetings with entire visiting committee. (*It is a basis for appeal if these meetings do not occur with two-way dialogue.*)
- _____ Daily schedule meetings with the principal or head of school. (*It is a basis for appeal if these meetings do not occur with two-way dialogue.*)

Prewrite with Visiting Committee Members

- _____ The VC chair works with the VC members following the guidelines below for notes and comments and prewrites on assigned areas. (**NOTE:** WASC/CDE chairs and schools and others may be using the revised streamlined VC report template. This is being sent to the chairs.)
- _____ The VC chair ensures the VC members have the capability to use the virtual platform and have participated in training and orientation prior to the visit.
- _____ The VC chair ensures the VC members understand the expectations of virtual visits: regular communication with VC chair and members; flexibility during the visit, visit occurring in a conducive location, e.g., quiet, no interruptions; adequate bandwidth and technology, i.e., a computer with a camera or ipad/tablet; addressed issue of substitute coverage with administration.

Work with Visiting Committee Members

- _____ Communicate with the members, i.e., phone calls, e-mails. Use the sample chair letters on the website and adapt for your communications. (**NOTE:** If a member cancels or does not show, inform the ACS WASC office immediately. Do not leave a voice message.)
- _____ Ensure the members understand the type of school being visited and the culture of the school, e.g., charter school. Encourage them to review the school’s website and send the school’s current action plan.
- _____ Have **all** members do thorough reading of the **entire** Self-Study Report and send questions/comments using the *ACS WASC Previsit Preparation Worksheets* for Chapters I–V; in Chapter IV, address all the criteria/indicators for each category). Use those comments to write drafts ahead of time for Chapters I, II, III, IV and V. (Use Google Docs for the template.)

- _____ Assign all members to specific ACS WASC criteria categories within the designated chapter of the visiting committee report and have them prepare analytical draft narratives from their study of the school report. With the exception of a smaller team (2–3 people) have **two** people write to each criteria category. Do not rewrite goals. (Use Google Docs for the template.)
- _____ **Also assign the members to write preliminary statements for specified accreditation factors prior to the determination of the accreditation status ratings.** (Use Google Docs for the documentation/justification statement.)
- _____ Maintain continual communication with visiting committee members via phone and e-mail (e.g., also Skype or /Zoom). Ensure all are prepared. Check on their participation in training.
- _____ Ensure all visiting committee members prepared preliminary questions and comments using the *ACS WASC Previsit Preparation Worksheet*. These preliminary questions and comments are shared with all visiting committee members prior to the visit along with the narrative drafts of the Visiting Committee chapters and goals. (Suggestion: use Google Docs templates for the *ACS WASC Previsit Preparation Worksheet* and the *ACS WASC Self-Study Visiting Committee Report Template*)

Virtual Visit and Follow-up:

NOTE: Ensure all key points under the Visit listed below are addressed within the reality of the need for adaptability and flexibility for a virtual visit.

- _____ The visiting team will **orally** present the *overall schoolwide strengths and the critical areas for follow-up (growth areas for continuous improvement)* and these will be sent electronically to the school; However, the visiting committee chair has 10 working days to complete the visiting committee report. The report is then Shared with the school and uploaded to the WASC portal.
- _____ WASC will organize a time for oral debriefing and written comments after the virtual visit. Information will be sent to the chairs and the schools.

The Visit: Expectations (correlated with the Visiting Committee Chair Checklist within the Focus on Learning manuals)

- _____ Facilitate, delegate, affirm. Maintain a positive atmosphere. **BE ON TIME FOR ALL MEETINGS, INCLUDING THE FINAL MEETING WITH THE LEADERSHIP TEAM, EVEN IF THE REPORT IS NOT COMPLETED.**
- _____ Ensure consensus on all critical questions for all groups based on visiting committee findings, linking them to accomplishment of the schoolwide learner outcomes, academic standards and ACS WASC criteria. Avoid issues related to school policies or negotiation. Avoid prescription and “how we do it at our school” discussion.
- _____ Conduct an in-depth orientation meeting for Visiting Committee members. Allow at least 2-3 hours for initial Visiting Committee meeting (usually Sunday or Monday). Follow agenda ideas in Visiting Committee Chair Checklist.

- Emphasize the basis for the self-study and visit is student learning: identified major student learner needs, the correlated schoolwide learner outcomes, academic standards and the ACS WASC criteria.
 - Discuss perceptions based on ACS WASC criteria. (Chart strengths, growth areas, etc.) And ways to gather and review evidence especially through observation and formal and informal dialogue.
 - Prepare specific questions for forthcoming initial Leadership Team meeting and decide on strategies for conducting the meeting
 - Prepare specific questions for other scheduled meetings on that first day, e.g., parents and/or governing authority.
 - Review the schedule in relation to end products daily and the determination of status aligned with findings. (Refer to the Accreditation Status Determination Worksheet.)
 - **Remind members to obtain** detailed meal receipts to submit to school/district or WASC for reimbursement.
- _____ Keep in mind the continual need to synthesize the findings based on the ACS WASC criteria. (For example, debrief after these initial meetings as visiting committee members now finalize questions for other meetings and gain consensus of the entire visiting team.)
- _____ Always relate questions and findings to draft single schoolwide action plan within **all** meetings — **the final product of the Self-Study and the “roadmap” for next steps.** Also, if it is a CA public school examine the alignment of the schoolwide action plan to the District LCAP; HI, the State Strategic Plan 2017-2020; Guam, the State Strategic Plan.
- _____ Work with the school on the schoolwide action plan or academic plan as needed, e.g., in the Leadership Team meetings.
- _____ Ask the most important questions related to high expectations for all students, student achievement and meeting the ACS WASC or ACS WASC/_____ criteria.
- _____ Ensure accurate information is being reviewed through examination of representative student work and other documents. Ask the “right” questions of the appropriate stakeholders, and observe students engaged in learning and the program and other aspects of the school
- _____ Plan specifically for all meetings, *i.e., written questions/group techniques and input from all visiting committee members in the preplanning for the meetings.*
- _____ Daily meet with the Leadership Team (entire VC) and the chief administrator of the school (chair).
- _____ Complete half or more of the report by evening of the first full day.
- _____ Daily meet with the visiting committee to synthesize all findings and share drafts — dialogue about the school’s program and its impact on student learning in relation to the identified major student learner needs, schoolwide learner outcomes, academic standards and the ACS WASC or ACS WASC/_____ criteria.
- _____ Ensure that pertinent **student achievement data** from the school’s profile is embedded in the **visiting committee’s chapter on the Student/Community Profile**, with appropriate **analytical comments**.

- _____ Ensure that the comments for each criterion are analytical. (**Do NOT cut and paste from the self-study.**) **Address each indicator for each criterion; the suggestion is to comment on each one separately.**
- _____ Double check that all components of the Visiting Committee Report are completed, e.g., **the final list of Schoolwide Strengths and Critical Areas for Follow-up (e.g., CDE Growth Areas for Continuous Improvement) at the end of the Chapter on the criteria findings and Chapter V on the action plan.**
- Ensure that all three types of critical areas for follow-up are noted with a “WHO, WHAT, and WHY” in terms of impact on student learning.**
- Distinguish the different types of critical areas for follow-up (e.g., CDE growth areas for continuous improvement) with an introductory stem: (e.g., *The visiting committee concurs with what the school has already identified.*)**
- **Support those areas already identified by the school in the Action Plan goals**
 - **Strengthen those identified areas in the action plan goals**
 - **Address additional areas identified by the visiting committee**
- _____ Double check that the critical areas for follow-up (e.g., CDE growth areas for continuous improvement) directly **align** with the Key Issues (recommendations within the criteria categories) and honor what the school has already identified as you add additional critical areas for follow-up (e.g., CDE growth areas for continuous improvement)
- _____ Individually have all members complete the **Accreditation Status Determination Worksheet**. Use the rubric descriptions and the ACS WASC criteria indicators to ensure careful thinking about each criteria area.
- _____ Determine the recommended status by consensus using the **Accreditation Status Determination Worksheet**.
- _____ Double check that the ratings in the Documentation/Justification Statement and comments directly **align** with what is in the Visiting Committee Report and there is a clearly stated rationale based upon the factors for the recommended status. (Refer members to the Accreditation Status Explanation information on the website and ensure member signatures are on the Accreditation Status Recommendation—the ballot.)
- _____ Provide a draft copy electronically for **all** Leadership Team members at the final meeting for discussion of each section. **DO NOT READ THIS REPORT.** *If this two-way dialogue does not occur, it is a basis for appeal of the term by the school.*
- Ensure the Leadership Team has an opportunity to ask questions and clarify areas of the report for follow-up; include a “who, what, and why” in terms of impact on student learning.
 - Distinguish the different types of critical areas for follow-up with an introductory stem: e.g., the visiting committee concurs with the areas already identified by the school.
 - Continually stress the importance of immediate follow-up to integrate visiting committee narrative suggestions and critical areas for follow-up into the schools’ action plan for yearly implementation, monitoring and reassessment. (Submit the updated schoolwide action plan to ACS WASC; this is due 6 weeks after the visit.

- _____ Work with the visiting committee members to discuss and investigate any issues or questions raised in the dialogue with the Leadership Team. Facilitate any necessary visiting committee report modifications as the report is finalized.
- _____ Finalize the consensus on the ratings and completion of the documentation/justification statement and final status recommendation.
- _____ Present **orally** at the end of the visit to the entire staff and other stakeholders. **DO NOT READ THIS REPORT.** Use the PowerPoint presentation template provided on the ACS WASC website regarding the overall findings from the visit.
- _____ Leave a **draft** report with the school. (The Visiting Committee is required to leave a draft report. The school must revise the action plan and send it to ACS WASC within 6 weeks of the visit and begin implementing the plan. The Commission may want to review it.)
- _____ Review the visiting committee expense forms and submit to appropriate personnel at school. (Note: A few exceptions about billing exist. ACS WASC staff will have alerted the visiting committee chair.) **Sign the members' reimbursement request forms.**
- _____ Complete evaluations of members and have members evaluate chair (optional).
- _____ Send electronically the final visiting committee report to school within two weeks after the visit and upload the document to ACS WASC.

After the Visit (correlated with the Visiting Committee Chair Checklist within the Focus on Learning manuals)

- _____ **Within two weeks of the visit**, finalize the editing of the visiting committee report, the Accreditation Status Recommendation and the Documentation and Justification Statement and send to ACS WASC. **Send the final report in PDF to the school.**
- _____ Send evaluations of the visiting committee members.
- _____ Send the appropriate letters of appreciation.
- _____ Communicate to the visiting committee members the Commission decision on the final accreditation status awarded to the school. (The Commission decision is reached at the January, April or June meetings. A copy of the official letter is sent to the chair.)