

WASC Words International

— Fall 2019 —

Inside this Issue

- Key to the Focus on High-Quality Learning for All Students
- WASC Focus on Learning Criteria Revisions: Information Literacy and Digital Citizenship
- Boarding School Criteria Revisions
- International Task Force on Child Protection (ITCP)
- School Substantive Changes and their Impact on Student Learning
- Pre-initial Visits for New Applicant Schools
- International Training Sessions
- WASC Chat Rooms
- International Staff and International Consultants

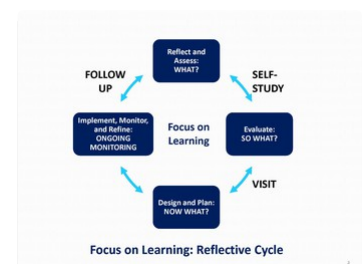
Click on the **Subscribe** bar below and enter your information if you would like to be added to automatically receive future publications of this newsletter.

Subscribe

Key to the Focus on High-Quality Learning for All Students

Reflection! Re-enforcement! Renewal! Through the WASC Focus on Learning process, schools are engaged in reflection, assessment, and evaluation culminating in an updated action plan that is monitored and continually re-assessed based on the impact on student learning and well-being. In *Coherent School Leadership: Forging Clarity from Complexity* (2019), Michael Fullan and Lyle Kirtman explain that coherence involves a shared understanding about what needs to be done in order to ensure the desired results for students.

Through the *Focus on Learning* guiding principles, schools are empowered to build capacity and



coherence. Involvement and collaboration of leadership, staff, students, teachers, parents, governance, and other stakeholders is essential in the continuous self-reflection process. Through FOL, stakeholders are addressing questions that include: What do we believe? Who are the students? How are they achieving the broader schoolwide learner outcomes and the academic standards? What are their major student learner needs? How do we know? How effective are our programs, systems and operations and what evidence supports the degree of impact on student learning? What do we need to design, plan, implement, and monitor to strengthen learning? How will the schoolwide action plan focus on areas of greatest student and therefore teacher/school needs and be owned by all stakeholders?

In summary, the accreditation process is synonymous with continuous school improvement that focuses on the trustworthiness of a school as a place for learning by all students. It provides an ongoing look at the work and achievement of students, teachers, school and system wide leadership. However, the refinement for greater coherence and capacity building is ever present and must be pursued with a sense of urgency.

WASC Focus on Learning Criteria Revisions: Information Literacy and Digital Citizenship

With the influence of social media and rapid access to information, schools have a responsibility to teach skills related to information technology. Several years ago, Finland identified that outside entities could pose a threat to the Finnish values, identity and political process.

They responded to this knowledge by explicitly teaching how to identify bias and accuracy in digital media. As a result of this explicit and intentional focused instruction, Finland has educated, informed citizens who know how to read and evaluate information in all forms and use technology in a balanced and respectful manner.



As a part of the continuous improvement process, ACS WASC is revising its criteria and indicators to emphasize the need for schools to focus on developing concepts and competencies that will help students to:

- Evaluate sources before selecting them for research
- Develop heightened awareness of how technology affects others, including etiquette and taking content without permission
- Stay safe online
- Balance face-to-face time with the use of technology.

Boarding School Criteria Revisions

More schools are interested in accrediting their boarding programs. This past summer a review and revision was conducted of the School Boarding Program Standards. One major addition has been the expectation the schools have a “student advocate.” This child protection addition is to provide an independent advocate for students when they are experiencing difficulty in their dormitory setting. These updated standards will be available by November 15.

International Task Force on Child Protection (ITCP)

During May, WASC and other ITCP committee members met in Washington, D.C. with the purpose of envisioning the future of the ITCP and determining strategic direction for the next five years. The five areas of impact that evolved from this meeting were the following: Identity and Response; Accountability; Leadership; Education, Training and Policies; and Student Voice. In December, the working groups for these five areas will convene in Cambridge to plan and progress the actions that will be undertaken. WASC and the other accrediting agencies are members of the Accountability area as this group focuses on actions to ensure accountability about child protection through accreditation systems and standards.



School Substantive Changes and Their Impact on Student Learning

When schools plan and implement substantive changes, such as new facilities, different academic programs, or additional grade levels, reflecting on the purpose of the change and how it impacts student learning helps the school determine the value of the change. Making time for collaborative conversations supports the school in maintaining a **focus on learning** so that everyone develops shared understanding about the purpose and the impact of the change. Some key questions for the collaborative conversations might be:

- How has this change impacted student learning? How do we know?
- What is different about students' level of understanding? What are students now able to do?
- What evidence do we have that, as a result of the change, students are becoming more of what we aspire for them?
- How has the change supported teachers and students in moving closer to the school's mission, core values, and schoolwide learner outcomes?

Pre-initial Visits for New Applicant Schools

WASC is finding is that some new schools may need further advice and guidance in order to fulfill the many parameters of international accreditation built upon the WASC Guiding Principles that include worldwide research-based criteria and indicators. Child protection policies and procedures must be in place to ensure a healthy, nurturing environment that is safe and secure for the students. Primarily the school must be focusing on student learning and well-being which emanates from the school's mission, schoolwide learner outcomes that encompass identified student learner needs, and global competencies. The impact of the programs, systems, and operations on student learning must be constantly measured in order to revise and refine the schoolwide action plan that guides and focuses the stakeholders on what needs to be done to impact student learning and well-being.

Therefore, WASC has been implementing pre-initial visits after review of the school's request for affiliation and the supporting documentation and dialogue with the potential school. This conversation is based on the WASC Guiding Principles and international criteria. These pre-initial visits are providing specific guidance for schools in order to assist them in the readiness for an initial visit.

International Training Sessions

Please see below for upcoming international training sessions during the 2019-2020 school year.

ACS WASC 2019–2020 International Training Sessions

LOCATION	DETAILS	DATES
Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia	EARCOS: Pre-Conference Training	October 29, 2019
Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia	EARCOS: Visiting Committee Chair Training	October 30, 2019
Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia	EARCOS: Visiting Committee Member Training	November 3, 2019
Singapore	Singapore American School	November 9, 2019
Shenzhen, China	Shen Wai International School	November 16, 2019
Tokyo, Japan	Tokyo YMCA International School (Visiting committee member training)	January 18, 2020
New York	AAIE Conference	February 2, 2020
Beijing, China	ACAMIS Keystone Academy	March 6–7, 2020
Taiwan	Hsinchu County American School	March 14, 2020
Helsinki, Finland	CEESA Conference	March 19, 2020
Bangkok, Thailand	EARCOS Teachers' Conference (Shangri-la Hotel)	March 26–28, 2020
Shenzhen, China	NCIC Immersion School	March 28, 2020

WASC Chat Rooms

WASC will be providing a chat room where self-study coordinators for 2020-21 visits can meet and dialogue facilitated by one more more of the WASC international consultants. There will also be a chat room for visiting committee chairs for 2020 visits. The schedules will be announced by December 1.

International Staff and Consultants

International WASC staff and consultants are available to provide accreditation coaching and training in the following areas:

- Asia: Barbara Parker, based in China
- Asia, especially South East Asia: Stephen Messiah, based in Thailand
- Japan, Korea and Taiwan: Alana Stewart
- Africa, Europe, and Middle East: David Ottaviano, based in Italy



David Ottaviano, Director of International Accreditation Services

David Ottaviano joined ACS WASC in July 2017 as the director of international accreditation services. Dr. Ottaviano most recently served as the head of GEMS International School – Al Khail in Dubai. He has extensive experience in school administration and ACS WASC. His tenure as a school head includes ten years as a public school superintendent in New Jersey and 21 years as the head of private, international schools in Serbia, Italy, Japan, Romania, and the UAE. Dr. Ottaviano has served as president of IB North Asia, vice president of East Asia Region Council of International Schools (EARCOS), and chairman of Central and Eastern Schools Association (CEESA). Dr. Ottaviano received a B.A. from Grove City College in Psychology, an M.A. in School Psychology from Montclair State University, and an Ed.D. from Fairleigh Dickinson University in Educational Leadership and Psychology.

✉ dottaviano@acswasc.org



Stephen Massiah, International Consultant

Stephen (Steve) Massiah joined ACS WASC in July 2017 as an international consultant working with schools throughout Asia. He is based out of Bangkok, Thailand. Steve comes to ACS WASC after successful positions in international schools in Doha, Qatar; Seoul, South Korea; Bangkok, Thailand; and Hong Kong. Prior to this he was a principal in Toronto, Canada; an adjunct instructor at the Faculty of Education, University of Toronto; and an interim position (secondment) with the Ontario College of Teachers.

✉ smassiah@acswasc.org



Barbara Parker, International Consultant

Barbara Parker has worked in international schools in Southeast Asia, Pakistan, Africa, and the Mediterranean for almost 30 years. She was formerly the director of the International School of Beihai. She recently designed and developed curriculum for several new international schools in China and the Asia-Pacific region, some of which were designed particularly for English language learners.

✉ bparker@acswasc.org



Alana Steward, International Consultant

Alana Steward joined the ACS WASC team as a part-time international consultant in July 2017. After beginning her teaching career in her native Canada, Alana has been teaching and leading in schools in various countries for the past 19 years. She has traveled extensively with her family and has worked in countries including Macau, Kyrgyzstan, Singapore, Austria, and Japan.

✉ asteward@acswasc.org



Accrediting Commission for Schools, Western Association of Schools and Colleges

Dr. Marilyn S. George, Executive Vice President

✉ mgeorge@acswasc.org

☎ 650 696-1060

🌐 acswasc.org

