ACS WASC/CDE
Visiting Committee Training
2019-20 Schools
THANK YOU
As you think about your own school and its accreditation visits, what do you feel are the important characteristics of a quality accreditation visit?
Quality School Framework

- Curriculum
- Instruction
- Assessment
- Family & Community
- Equity
- Professional Learning
- Resource Alignment
- Culture & Climate
- Leaders
- Teachers
- Students Learning & Thriving
ACS WASC

The School Community’s Work

Previsit Work of VC Members/Chair

Visit and Status Recommendation
ACS WASC accredits K-12 schools and not-for-profit, non-degree granting postsecondary institutions.
Key Materials to Download and Print


Visiting Committee Member Checklist
Sample Visit Schedule
Reference Card 2
Accreditation Status Worksheet
Visiting Committee Member Checklist

Previsit Preparation

1. Receive the first letter from Visiting Committee chairperson that addresses:
   a. Requests for preferred areas of coverage during the visit
   b. Training session schedule reminder
   c. The review of accreditation materials

2. Attend WASC member training.

3. Study the school description, the Focus on Learning manual, and the reference cards Sections of Focus on Learning to emphasize: The Big Picture; The Self-Study; Background Information; The Self-Study; The Visit; The Follow-up; The Tools: Criteria/Suggested Evidence; Expected Schoolwide Learning Results (Schoolwide Learner Outcomes); Gathering Evidence.

4. Become aware of the parameters of the self-study followed by the school:
   - the involvement and collaboration of stakeholders in the self-study
   - the clarification of the school’s purpose and expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes)
   - the assessment of the actual student program and its impact on student learning with respect to the criteria
   - the development of a schoolwide action plan and integrated subject area/support program that addresses identified growth needs
   - the development and implementation of an accountability system for monitoring the accomplishment of the schoolwide action plan
ACS WASC

- Private, nonprofit
- Serves California, Hawaii, Pacific Islands, and worldwide (especially Asia)
- Extends services to approximately 5,000 pre-K-12 schools
- Partners with 18 associations in joint accreditation partnerships
- Commission of 32 members from partner associations
ACS WASC Accreditation Cycle of Quality

- Year 1
- Year 2
- Year 3
- Year 4
- Year 5
- Year 6

Focus on Learning
How well are our students achieving?

Are we doing everything possible to support high achievement for all students?
Where is the school now? Where’s it going? Does it have a good roadmap?
Outcomes of Self-Study

Involvement and collaboration

Clarification and measurement of Schoolwide Learner Outcomes

Data analysis

Assessment of entire school program and its impact on student learning

Alignment of long-range action plan to school’s areas need; implement and monitor plan
The School Community’s Work

Previsit Work of VC Members/Chair

Visit and Status Recommendation
REVISED manual
Dated 2018 ACS
WASC Edition
(2019-20 SY Visits)
School Organization

Leadership Team

Profile Team

Home Groups

Focus Groups
Chapter I Progress Report

1. Significant developments
2. Schoolwide critical areas for follow-up (last full visit and any mid-cycle or special visit)
3. Ongoing follow-up processes
4. Progress, evidence, impact on student learning for Action Plan sections/goals showing integration of schoolwide key issues
5. Critical areas for follow-up not currently in Action Plan
Chapter I Progress Report

1. Significant developments
2. Schoolwide critical areas for follow-up (last full visit and any midterm or special visit)
3. Ongoing follow-up processes
4. Progress, evidence, impact on student learning for Action Plan sections/goals showing integration of schoolwide key issues
5. Critical areas for follow-up not currently in Action Plan
Chapter II Profile

Data and School Background

Demographic
Outcome
Process/Perception
Schoolwide Learner Outcome
Data and School Background

Chapter II Profile

Trends
Irregularities
Anomalies
Data and School Background

Chapter II Profile

Schoolwide Learner Outcomes

Major Student Learner Needs
Chapter II
Implications of data and progress with respect to student performance

Identification of 2 to 3 preliminary major learner needs (at this stage of the process) based on data

List important questions that have been raised by the analysis of the student data about the critical learner needs (Used by home and focus groups)
Chapter III Criteria Response

Organization

Curriculum

Instruction

Assessment

Support
**Criterion with Indicator and Prompt**

- **B: Standards-based Student Learning: Curriculum**
- **B1. Rigorous and Relevant Standards-Based Curriculum Criterion**

  All students participate in a rigorous, relevant, and coherent standards-based curriculum that supports the achievement of the academic standards, the college- and career-readiness standards, and the schoolwide learner outcomes. Through standards-based learning (what is taught and how it is taught), these are accomplished.

- **Indicators with Prompts**

  - **B1.1. Indicator**: The school uses current educational research related to maintain a viable, meaningful instructional program that prepares students for college, career, and life.
  
  - **B1.2. Prompt**: Evaluate how effective the school uses current educational research related to the curricular areas to maintain a viable, meaningful instructional program for students.
## Analysis of Student Data and Achievement and Assessment of Program Effectiveness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria/Indicators/Prompt Findings</th>
<th>Supporting Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Addressed identified Critical Learner/Learning Needs and related Schoolwide Learner Outcomes)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Big Three

1. Respond to the prompts

2. Ensure findings aligned with data and evidence

3. Assess how critical learner needs being addressed
Chapter IV: Summary of identified Major Student Learner Needs based on Profile and Focus Group analysis and findings

Student centered

Supported by school’s goals and data

Generally related to literacy, numeracy, and/or affect

Studied in Chapter IV/III

Reflected in Action Plan
Chapter V: One Plan

Aligned to/incorporated into the LCFF
Road to the Action Plan

- Schoolwide Learner Outcomes
- Data
- Critical Learner Needs
- Criteria Strengths
- Criteria Growth Areas

Action Plan
The School Community’s Work

Previsit Work of VC Members/Chair

Visit and Status Recommendation
Connecting with the Chairperson

Phone and/or email
Assignments in Chapter III
Information in initial contact with school personnel
Hotel/Schedule

Visiting Committee Member Checklist
Visiting Committee Report, 2018 Edition

Preface
ACS WASC Outcomes

Chapter I
Progress Report

Chapter II
Student-Community Profile

Chapter III
Self-Study Findings

Chapter IV
Schoolwide Strengths and Critical Areas for Follow-up

Chapter V
Ongoing School Improvement: Adequacy of action plan; support & impediments to progress; Follow-up process
Preparing for the Visit

Read the whole report!
Pre-visit Preparation

Mark it up - Annotate
Look for alignment

**Complete** previsit worksheet
Comments – Questions

**Complete** your assignments
Preparing for the Visit

VC Member Checklist #5

Review the ACS WASC CDE criteria, the criteria guide questions, suggested evidence to examine, appropriate academic standards, and educational references.
Your Prewriting Responsibilities

Use Previsit Worksheet

Comments/questions on all chapters

Chapter III: Criteria Category Assignments
Your prewriting assignment

Using the school’s self-study and available evidence:

- Synthesize the school’s response
- Draw in additional information which may be available in other chapters in the self-study, from the school’s website, and/or from other legitimate sources
- Draft a response to the PROMPT
- Indicate your questions and/or concerns
- Identify evidence
- Provide questions and/or comments for ALL sections of the report
Sample Indicator

D1. Assessment and Accountability:

D1. Using Assessment to Monitor and Modify Learning in the Classroom

Teachers employ a variety of appropriate formative and summative assessment strategies to evaluate student learning. Students and teachers use these findings to modify the learning/teaching practices to improve student learning.
• Indicators with Prompts

Indicator  D2.1 The school leadership and instructional staff use effective assessment processes to collect, disaggregate, analyze, and report student and school performance data to all stakeholders.

Prompt D2.1  Evaluate the effectiveness of the processes for assessing student achievement of the standards and schoolwide learner outcomes.
How Students Learn:  
Examples of areas to analyze

Areas to analyze in determining the degree to which the criterion is being met:

• Means by which student progress toward achieving the academic standards and the schoolwide learner outcomes is reported to the community (e.g., forums, newsletters)
• Extent to which parents and district and school board members are kept informed about the assessment results
• Extent to which school community, district, and board are involved in the review process
• Extent to which school staff is involved in the review process
• Extent to which students and parents are involved in the review process about student progress
• Other identified evidence.
Instruction
C1. Student Involvement in Challenging and Relevant Learning Criteria

All teachers use a variety of strategies and resources including technology and experiences beyond the textbook and the classroom that actively engage students, emphasize creative and critical thinking skills, and applications.
C1. Instruction

C1. Challenging and Relevant Learning Experiences Criterion

To achieve the academic standards, the college- and career-readiness standards, and the schoolwide learner outcomes, all students are involved in challenging and relevant learning experiences.

Indicators with Prompts

Results of Student Observations and Examining Work

C1.1. Indicator: The students are involved in challenging and relevant work as evidenced by observations of students working and the examination of student work.

C1.1. Prompt: Evaluate the degree to which all students are involved in challenging and relevant learning to achieve the academic standards, the college- and career-readiness standards, and the schoolwide learner outcomes. Include how observing students working and examining student work have informed this understanding. Provide evidence on how the school has evaluated the degree of involvement of students with diverse backgrounds and/or abilities and how the school has modified instruction based on these findings.
Areas to Analyze and Examine

• Observation of students working and student work that illustrates the extent to which all students are involved in learning to assist them in achieving the academic standards and schoolwide learner outcomes (examples of students working includes: oral presentations, individual and group work, discussions, investigations and experiments, performances; examples of student work include: essays, reports, project products, journals, portfolios, open-ended responses, tests, and online conversations)

• Observation/interviews/surveys to determine the extent to which students know beforehand the standard/expected performance levels for each area of study

partial list
At [school] we have created a four to six week professional development cycle that includes: learning a schoolwide strategy, practicing with teachers, practicing in class, being observed by a peer, and analyzing the student work in SWA. This cycle has benefitted our teachers, who are mainly new to the profession. They have developed in their instructional skill exponentially, rather than gradually over time.
C2: Instruction
Current Knowledge

Peer observations have given our teachers opportunities to both observe their peers using the school-wide strategies and to observe their own students in different academic classes and settings. This has proven to be invaluable to our grade level discussions and department meetings particularly as we look to improve writing. Teachers can see what other teachers do to engage students and to challenge them, which fosters tremendous collaboration among our professionals. Cycles have included: Rituals and Routines, Cornell Notes, 7 Habits, Accountable Talk, Frontloading Vocabulary, and a cycle of writing instruction is forthcoming.
Do the findings respond to what is being asked in the criteria?

Does the evidence support the findings? Strengths? Prioritized growth areas?

What insight has the school gained about student learning, the critical learner needs, and the schoolwide learner outcomes?
During professional development sessions led by teachers, staff has studied a variety of strategies to engage and challenge students. These have been supported by peer and administrative observations and the report states that teachers’ improvement “has been exponential.” This same model will be used as they move forward to improve writing.
VC Prewrite: Chapter IV:

Some Possible Ideas for Questions

• Sounds very interesting and positive What will teachers say privately?

• How qualified are the teacher-leaders?

• Are all teachers comfortable with this approach? Benefitting from it?

• What will students say?

• What do we actually look for in the classrooms?
Some Possible Ideas for Strengths and Growth Areas

Evidence: Self-Study

Possible Strength:

Leadership and staff – professional development program itself – staff and data driven, research-based – build internal expertise to further student growth

Possible Growth Area:

Leadership and staff – Continue and expand professional development program – writing *(Note: even here you should include who, what, and why)*
Over the past three years, teachers have participated in professional development sessions led by teachers. They have learned and practiced a variety of strategies to engage and challenge students. Using both peer and administrative observations as checks, the Visiting Committee confirmed that a majority of staff regularly use two to three different strategies during each class period to more actively engage students.
Speaking, questioning, and responding strategies are all incorporated. Teachers openly share with one another their own growth and continuing areas of weakness. Students are clear in expressing that “things are different all the time” and yet “all the teachers do sort of the same things. That makes it easier for me.” This excellent internal model should be used as staff moves more directly to improve writing.
C. Instruction

**Strength:** School leadership and staff’s close working relationship and respect that have helped produce an inexpensive, viable, and effective professional development program designed to support high-quality student learning.

**Growth Area:** Working with district leaders, School leadership and staff expand their strong professional development program to include writing strategies including both assignments and assessment tools to support high quality academic writing for all students.

**Evidence:** Self-Study Report; classroom and professional development observations; conversations with students, teachers, and administrators.
Develop your prewriting notes:

Narrative
Supporting Evidence
Ideas for clarification
Assessing impact
Strengths
Growth Areas
Questions
Layers of a Criteria Response

- Critical Learner Needs
- Different Programs and/or Departments
- Individual Groups of Students
- General
Work with your assigned partner
## Validation Language

**try verbs like these**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Achieve</th>
<th>Coincide</th>
<th>Exhibit</th>
<th>Prepare</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accomplish</td>
<td>Confirm</td>
<td>Finish</td>
<td>Provide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Close</td>
<td>Contribute</td>
<td>Fulfill</td>
<td>Relate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete</td>
<td>Correlate</td>
<td>Identify</td>
<td>Revise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclude</td>
<td>Demonstrate</td>
<td>Improve</td>
<td>Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contradict</td>
<td>Distinguish</td>
<td>Isolate</td>
<td>Systematize</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contribute</td>
<td>Enhance</td>
<td>Observe</td>
<td>Unite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contrast</td>
<td>Ensure</td>
<td>Perform</td>
<td>Validate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Each classroom is set-up for active use of technology plus there are three mobile carts of laptops and several document cameras available. However, there are no printing capabilities for students. Both Read 180 and the College Readiness classes use computers almost daily. There is also a newly instituted Digital Arts class. Teacher interviews indicate that a “significant number” of the laptops do not work and that the school’s wireless network is “slow and unreliable with insufficient bandwidth to support a class of students.” These deficiencies make it difficult to regularly and effectively use multimedia and other technology in the classroom.
Let’s chat...

• How important is this?
• What, if anything, seems to be missing? Confusing?
• Have you other questions or concerns?
• What’s the plan for finding out “how effective” and the connections to critical learner needs?
  • Where to go?
  • What to look for?
  • Questions to ask? Of whom?
Organization: Membership on the governing board has fluctuated greatly during the past 7 years in terms of personnel and outlook/goals. This lack of overall stability has contributed to a serious detriment in allowing professional staff to carry out their responsibilities.
**Instruction:** Observations and interviews by the focus group members have validated that instructional activities are widely varied for the majority of students. However, for high-performing students enrolled in Honors and Advanced Placement classes, the classrooms center primarily on teacher-directed instruction with few opportunities for alternate learning activities, instructional materials, or products.
To the chair on time!
The School Community’s Work

Previsit Work of VC Members/Chair

Visit and Status Recommendation
Sunday-Wednesday (usually)
How will we increase our understanding of the school’s self-study findings and student learning through the initial dialogue with school leaders?
VC Sunday Meeting

What have we learned from our previsit preparation?

What types of evidence need to be our focus?

What strengths and growth areas emerging?
VC Sunday Meeting

How can we focus our review and analysis of evidence through

- Examining student work and other information
- Observing students and other aspects of the program
- Interviewing students and other

What are the primary areas of interest to discuss with school personnel at our initial meeting?
Careful and Confidential
Observations

Who

Where

When

How

Know what you need to find out!
Interviews

Your assigned areas of study
Key issues
Plan
Documents

Student work
Handbooks
Curriculum documents
Recruiting brochures
School and district website
Meetings

VC and Leadership Team

VC and Focus Groups

VC and Other Groups
Powerful Questions about

Action plan
All students
Major Student Learner Needs
Criteria
Schoolwide learner outcomes
Academic standards
Evidence analyzed
Understanding and use of data
Modifying learning and teaching
Feedback to students
Coaching colleagues in new strategies
Intended impact on student learning
Follow-up process
Powerful Questioning Strategies
Some good general rules

Phrase your question to presume they are doing it (whatever you want to know more about) - not “do you do this…” rather “Share how you do/did this…”

Call on individuals, if not by name, then by role. “Let’s hear from a student/family member/Science teacher…..”

Ask ONLY one question at a time. Save the rest for the follow-up question or two

Phrase open ended questions – “How could we…?”

Allow wait time. Start easy and friendly.

Share your questions with the other members of the visiting committee
Sample Discussion Starters...

Help us understand...

Please clarify...?

We recognize that...

We understand from the self-study that...however,...

What led to this conclusion?

Is this characteristic of ...?

Which factors contributed to these results?

What elements of the student/community profile are related to...?

Reference Card 2

Sample Questions

As you’ve done X, how has it evolved over time?

What insights have you gained since you prepared the report?

How might this impact your identified critical learner/learning needs?

Talk about evidence that led to the conclusions given.

Share what you personally have learned about student learning and success in your classroom/department/grade level? Was this a surprise?

School self-study says “this” and we’ve seen “that”? Help us understand.
Questions for Focus Groups

Think about your assigned areas
Write a question or two
Share with a partner
Report to the group for discussion
Thoughtful Meeting Preparation

Room arrangement
Timekeeper
Ensure clear agenda

VC Team consensus on important questions
One Plan = LCFF

Feasible
Commitment
Support
Barriers
Follow-up process
Alignment

Adequacy
Action steps
Understandable
Through implementing the action plan, what might be different for students as global citizens?

One year from now?

Two years from now?

Three years from now?
Visiting Committee Synthesis Meetings

What should the VC include at these daily meetings based on the key concepts of the criteria, the Self-Study, and findings during the visit?

How do you ensure the report reflects accurate school findings and a “Whole Visiting Committee” view?

Rewriting and Revising
Critical Areas for Follow-Up

Those areas that **support** areas already identified in the action plan sections

Those areas that **strengthen** areas already identified in the action plan sections

Potential **additional areas** not addressed by school.
Critical Areas for Follow-Up

Who
What (diagnostic not prescriptive)
Why
Sample Critical Area for Follow-up

Who

The leadership, instructional staff, and other stakeholders increase the use of the results from analyzing student achievement data in modifying instruction, particularly in the areas of reading, writing, mathematics, and critical thinking skills to improve student learning.

What

Why
Improve these Samples

The development of a systematic review process to assess the impact of education programs and materials on student learning.

The school needs to explore professional development that meets the learning needs of the students.

Move forward with curricular integration among the various disciplines.
Staff members must ensure all students have access to appropriate materials.

Mr. Smith should lead a team to evaluate possible credit recovery online courses for students.

Confirm that all 9th grade students are enrolled in college/career preparatory classes to guarantee graduation.
How do you ensure the VC report reflects accurately school findings and the unified Visiting Committee perspective?
What accreditation status best supports the school’s improvement needs?
Alignment
Status Rationale based on Findings
Alignment, Alignment, Alignment

Important learning needs of the students
Correlation of major areas for follow-up to key issues
Rationale for accreditation status recommendation
Doc & Just-ratings, comments, & VC report findings
Accreditation Status Factors:
VC Recommendation and Commission Action

- Highly Effective
- Effective
- Somewhat Effective
- Ineffective
Reaching Agreement

Have our questions and does our writing support this conclusion?
Accreditation Status

Six-Year Accreditation Status

Progress report at mid-cycle
Progress report and one-day visit at mid-cycle
Progress report and two-day visit at mid-cycle

One-or-Two-Year Probationary Status with an in-depth progress report and a two-day visit

Accreditation Status Withheld
ACS WASC Accreditation Status Timeline

Self-Study

Year 1
Six-Year Accreditation Granted

Year 2
[School Preparing Mid-cycle Report and/or Visit]

Mid-cycle Report and One-Day Visit
Mid-cycle Report
Mid-cycle Report and Two-Day Visit

Year 3

Special Progress Report and/or Visit (if required)

Year 4

Special Visit and/or Report (if required)

Year 5

[School Preparing Next Self-Study]

Next Self-Study

Year 6

Next Self-Study

LEGEND: Accredited: Accreditation Withheld: Probationary Accreditation: Reapply

*Accreditation Withheld:
  Appeal Process and Visit
  Reinstatement Process and Visit

Next Self-Study in three years

Accreditation Visit (if required)

Next Self-Study

A special visit and/or report may be required at any time in the accreditation cycle.
Documentation and Justification

Short-short-form of the analytical summary of self-study looking at “to what extent” the school meets the criteria plus rationale for status
Visiting Committee Report

Public

Documentation & Justification

Confidential
Wednesday

VC and Leadership Team meeting
Whole school presentation
On the visit

**Do**

Be a team player
Validate & extend, not evaluate
Support, not judge
Celebrate successes
Prepare & plan
Listen
Focus on important issues
Work for consensus
Work toward the action plan
Confidentiality

**Don’t**

Try to solve their problems; diagnostic not prescriptive
Argue over words; do ensure that ideas are captured & clear
Focus on small things
Talk about your school. It’s “a school”
Over eat or over sleep
Not your school you’re going home

we NOT me

Big Issues

confidential

Team

transparency

learn
Sylvia Taylor
staylor@acswasc.org
650.235-8621

Elizabeth Oberreiter
San Diego Office
951.693.2550

Joanne Cacicedo
Burlingame Office
650.696.1060

California Department of Education
www.cde.gov
ACS WASC

We Are Student Centered
Tell us about your experience today