ACS WASC

Pacific Islands

Visiting Committee Member Training
ACS WASC
“We Are Student Centered”

Serving 5,200 Schools in the US, Asia,
Pacific Islands, Africa,
Middle East, and Europe

20 affiliations
(e.g., ACS WASC/CDE, ACS WASC/HIDOE, ACS WASC/WCEA, CIS/ACS WASC, China and Thailand Ministries)

33-member Commission

Worldwide
Hague
Apostille, 1961
The School Community’s Work

Previsit Work of VC Members/Chair

Visit and Status Recommendation
WHAT DOES ACS WASC ACCREDITATION MEAN TO A VISITING COMMITTEE MEMBER?
What does ACS WASC ACCREDITATION mean to a visiting committee member?

- Inspection
- School report
- Teacher-focused
- Individual/small Group work only
- One correct/best way

- Pose questions and paraphrase to deepen school’s reflection
- Identify effective structures and habits
- Probe to support student-focused thinking
- Paraphrase and synthesize as a team
- Pay attention to self and others
Connect – Extend – Challenge

• How does the definition of accreditation shape my role as visiting committee member?

• How does this definition influence how I prepare and interact as a visiting committee member?

• Based on this, what challenges do I see in my work as a visiting committee member?
How well are our students achieving?

Are we doing everything possible to support high achievement for all students?
Accreditation Cycle of Quality

Follow-up

Self-Study

Visit

Focus on Learning

Plan

Assess

Implement

Reassess
ACS WASC Accreditation Cycle of Quality

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

Focus on Learning
WASC Guiding Principles
(enable a school to demonstrate)

• Accomplishment of its vision, mission, and schoolwide learner outcomes

• High achievement of all students related to academic standards and schoolwide learner outcomes

• Use of multiple ways to analyze data

• Evaluation of program effectiveness

• Alignment of prioritized findings to a schoolwide action plan focusing on student achievement

• Ongoing improvement responsibility

• Total involvement and collaboration of all stakeholders

• Culture that supports the well-being of all students
Where is the school now?
Where’s it going?
Does it have a good roadmap?
Ongoing Journey
I used to think......
but now I understand....

An important point to keep in mind is.....
Therefore, What is my role as a visiting committee member?

To be knowledgeable
about what the school has written
about the culture of the school
about the ACS WASC criteria
about the Focus on Learning process
VC Review of All Aspects of a Quality School Framework
Key Materials to Download and Print

- Visiting Committee Member (VC) Checklist
- VC Previsit Worksheet
- VC Report Template
- Accreditation Status Worksheet
- VC Documentation/Justification Template
- Sample Visit Schedule
- Reference Card 2

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
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
ACS WASC/Guam Self-Study-Pilot Edition
(5 categories of criteria rather than 4 categories.)

Preface
Chapter I Data
Chapter II Progress
Chapter III Conclusions
Chapter IV Organization
Chapter IV Curriculum
Chapter IV Instruction
Chapter IV Assessment
Chapter IV Culture/Support
Chapter V Action Plan
Appendices
School Organization

Leadership Team

Profile Team

Home Groups

Focus Groups
Data and School Background

Chapter I: Profile
Data

Demographic

Outcome

Process/Perception
Chapter II: 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 III: Profile/Progress Summary

Implications of data and progress with respect to student performance

Two to three critical learner needs based on data, noting correlated schoolwide learner outcomes

Important questions that have been raised by the analysis of the student data about the critical learner needs (Used by home and focus groups)
Major Student Learning Needs

Approximately 40% of our 9th grade students are unprepared for Algebra.

Students’ academic writing generally is weak.

EL students have limited academic vocabulary in English.

Students’ motivation and/or interest
Critical or Major Student Learning Needs

Student centered

Supported by school’s goals and data

Generally related to literacy, numeracy, and/or affect

Studied in Chapter III/IV

Reflected in Action Plan
Chapter IV: Criteria

- Organization
- Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment
- Support
- Resources
Chapter IV: WASC/GDOE Criteria Categories

A. Organization: Vision and Mission, Schoolwide Learner Outcomes; Governance; Leadership; Staff; and Resources
B. Standards-based Student Learning: Curriculum
C. Standards-based Student Learning: Instruction
D. Standards-based Student Learning: Assessment and Accountability
E. School Culture and Quality Support for Student Personal and Academic Growth
C2. Instruction Criterion: Rigorous and Relevant Instruction, Sample Indicator and Prompt

C2. Instruction Criterion:

All teachers provide students with a variety of activities and assignments that are engaging and call for higher order thinking.

Current Knowledge Indicator: Teachers are current in the instructional content taught and research-based instructional methodology, including the integrated use of multimedia and technology.

Prompt: Evaluate the extent to which teachers are current in the instructional content and effectively use multimedia and other technology in the delivery of the curriculum.
How Students Learn: Possible Areas to Examine and Analyze

• The degree to which various learning styles of students are addressed through a variety of instructional approaches
• The extent to which teachers are facilitators of student learning
• Student work that provides evidence that students are, over time, becoming more adept at gathering information and presenting it in written, oral and multimedia formats
• The extent to which new information or learning tasks are connected to personal experiences and knowledge
## Analysis of Student Data & Achievement and Assessment of Program Effectiveness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria/Indicators Findings</th>
<th>Supporting Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Addressed identified Critical Learner Needs and related Schoolwide Learner Outcomes)</td>
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</table>
One Plan
Schoolwide Learner Outcomes + Data = Action Plan

Criteria Strengths + Criteria Growth Areas = Action Plan
The School Community’s Work

Previsit Work of VC Members/Chair

Visit and Status Recommendation
Activity:

Directions: Working with the workshop facilitator, work individually or as a table group on unpacking other criteria, e.g., D2.

As a visiting committee member:

• What are the major concepts of the criteria and indicators?
• What critical data/information should be reviewed in order to respond analytically as a visiting committee member?
Activity: Unpack the Criterion/Indicators

D2. Using Assessment to Monitor and Modify Learning in the Classroom Criterion

• To what extent do teachers employ a variety of appropriate formative and summative assessment strategies to evaluate student learning?

• To what extent do students and teachers use these findings to modify the learning/teaching practices to improve student learning?
D2. Indicators (cont.)

• **Appropriate Assessment Strategies:** Teachers use appropriate assessment strategies to measure student progress toward acquiring academic standards and the schoolwide learner outcomes.

• **Using Assessment Data:** Assessment data are used to make decisions and modify instructional practices.

• **Demonstration of Student Achievement:** A variety of standards-based curriculum-embedded assessments (e.g., student work, pre- and post-assessments, performance tasks, etc.) demonstrate student achievement of the academic standards and the schoolwide learner outcomes.

• **Teacher Feedback to Students:** Teachers provide timely, specific and descriptive feedback in order to support students in achieving learning goals, academic standards and schoolwide learner outcomes.
Preparing for the Visit

Read the whole report!
Mark it up-Annotate
Look for alignment

Complete previsit worksheet with comments for each chapter
Comments – Questions for every portion of the report

Complete your assignments
ACS WASC/Guam Visiting Committee Report
(Some schools chose this edition-5 categories of criteria rather than 4 categories.)

Chapter I
Data

Chapter II
Progress

Chapter III
Process

Chapter IV
Organization

Chapter IV
Curriculum

Chapter IV
Instruction

Chapter IV
Assessment

Chapter IV
Culture/Support

Chapter V
Action Plan
Your Prewriting Responsibilities

Use Previsit Worksheet

Comments/questions on all chapters

Chapter IV: Criteria Category Assignments
Your prewriting assignment continued

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

• Begin writing *an analytical summary* of the school’s response for each assigned criterion/indicators/prompts

• 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

• Add additional questions and/or concerns that emerge as you write

• Identify potential strengths, growth areas and evidence (self-study main evidence in preparation)
VC Report, Chapter IV: Quality of the School’s Program

Based on the school’s self-study and visiting committee findings, for each criterion in the following categories:

A. Organization: Vision, Mission, Schoolwide Learner Outcomes, Governance, Leadership, Staff, and Resources
B. Standards-based Student Learning: Curriculum
C. Standards-based Student Learning: Instruction
D. Standards-based Student Learning: Assessment and Accountability
E. School Culture and Support for Student Personal and Academic Growth

• Summarize an analysis of what currently exists and its impact on student learning
• Highlight the areas of strength (if any)
• Highlight the key issues (if any)
• List important evidence about student learning from the self-study and the visit that supports these

• Strengths and Key Issues.

Note: When writing the analytical 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 Accreditation Status Determination Worksheet).
A Practice---
Reading the Self-Study Report: Reflective Questions:

• What are you learning in relation to the criterion and indicators?
• How did the school evaluate itself against the criterion?
• What is the evidence?
• What appears to be strengths?
• What are growth areas?
Category C: Instruction
C2. Student Engagement Criterion

• **To what extent** do all teachers provide students with a variety of activities and assignments that are engaging (e.g., technology-enhanced and experiences beyond the textbook) and call for higher order thinking?

**Current Knowledge**

• **Indicator:** Teachers are current in the instructional content taught and research-based instructional methodology, including the integrated use of multimedia and technology.

• **Prompt:** Evaluate the extent to which teachers are current in the instructional content and instructional methodology and effectively use multimedia and other technology in the delivery of the curriculum.
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.
Peer observation has given our teachers opportunities to both observe their peers using the school-wide strategies, but also 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.
Big Questions

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.
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
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 five different strategies during each class period to more actively engage students.
Writing, speaking, questioning, and responding strategies are all incorporated. Teachers openly speak with one another about 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 will 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 highly 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, 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 and teachers.
Do NOT Copy from the Self-Study:
Complete an analytical summary from
gathered the visit’s evidence and self-study

No Copy & Paste. No Copy & Paste.
No Copy & Paste. No Copy & Paste.
No Copy & Paste. No Copy & Paste.
No Copy & Paste. No Copy & Paste.
Layers of a Criteria Response

- General
- Individual Groups of Students
- Different Programs and/or Departments
- Critical Learner Needs
To the chair on time!
The School Community’s Work

Previsit Work of VC Members/Chair

Visit and Status Recommendation
The Visit: Visiting Committee Members

ACS WASC Visiting Committee Members Strengthen School’s Core Work — Improving Student Learning
Schedule

Sunday-Wednesday (usually)
Based on ACS WASC/CDE criteria, school’s purpose and schoolwide learner outcomes and self-study, the Visiting Committee (VC)...

- Provides insight about student learning and school program
  - Validates school program
  - Celebrates school strengths
  - Provides recommendations on growth areas
- Observes, Interviews, Conducts Meetings
- Prepares a written report for school and Commission
- Recommends an accreditation status
- Commission takes action
School: Previsit Discussion Areas

• The Visit Schedule — developed collaboratively
  • 2 people at all schoolwide focus groups (1 ½–2 hours)
  • Daily leadership team meeting with entire visiting team
  • Daily chair-principal meeting
  • Visit all classes (keep record) and talk to all
  • Examples of other meetings based on school
    • Parents
    • Students
    • Support Staff
    • Administrators
    • Subject Areas/Departments/ Programs
    • Counseling Dept., Special Ed, AVID, Title I
    • Other individual or groups
Notes

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
Thoughtful Meeting Preparation

VC team consensus on important questions

Room arrangement
Timekeeper
Ensure clear agenda
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

Even More Sample Discussion Starters...

Share with us....
What do you think about....
Please describe for us.....
What do you think about.....
Tell us about...; Tell us more about...
How does the school ensure that...
In what ways does this impact...
To what extent is/are....
To what degree is ...How effective is ..... What tells you this?
What do you believe...
In what ways do you ensure....
Powerful Questions about

Action plan
All students
Critical learner/learning needs
Criteria
Schoolwide learner/learning 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
Asking Good Questions

Don’t Ask Yes or No Questions; seek the open-ended ones.

Ask one question at a time; but have the follow-up question ready.

Know your purpose

Plan your questions

Allow wait time. Start easy and friendly

Don’t Interrupt

Follow general questions with specific ones.

Use the Power of Silence

Pretend they are doing what you are asking about

Test your questions on team mates

To what degree is ... How effective is ..... What tells you this?
Sample Good 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 major learner 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.
The Visit: Visiting Committee Members
Let’s practice some questions.

ACS WASC VC Members Strengthen School’s Core Work — Improving Student Learning
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 are 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?
Always Link to the School Plan

Feasible
Commitment
Support
Barriers
Follow-up process
Alignment

Adequacy
Action steps
Understandable
Always Link to the School Plan

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?
A Practice:
Initial Leadership Team Meeting

How will we increase our understanding of the school’s self-study findings and student learning through the initial dialogue with school leaders?
Initial Leadership Team Meeting

Directions: At each table develop 3 questions to ask at the Initial Leadership Team meeting. Workshop.

Facilitator will pair table groups. One table group roles plays the VC Team and shares the questions to the second table group, who role plays the Leadership Team and provides feedback to the VC Team role playing group.

Table groups then reverse roles.
Questions for Focus Groups

Think about your assigned areas
Write a question or two
Share with a partner
Report to the group for discussion
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
## Tables of Strengths and Key Issues

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Curriculum</th>
<th>Instruction</th>
<th>Assessment &amp; Accountability</th>
<th>School Culture &amp; Student Support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Copy Strengths from each category</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Copy Key Issues from each category</td>
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VC Report—Chapter IV

- Schoolwide strengths
- Schoolwide critical areas for follow-up
  - Support identified areas
  - Strengthen identified areas
  - Address additional areas
VC Schoolwide Strengths

Who?  What?  Why?

What would like to see your own school’s report in relation to clarity and specificity — understanding by all?
What type of strengths would you want to be in a report for your school?

- Students have access to rigorous, relevant, and coherent standards-based curriculum where they are required to think critically and write across all subject areas.
- The school has a strong and appropriate vision/mission to which it very intentionally aligns its schoolwide learner outcomes, LCAP, and messaging and to which all stakeholders share a strong commitment.
- Technology
- CTE pathways
- Rigorous, focused and engaging instruction
- There is an established culture of academic success and rigor.
- The students are actively involved in the community.
Support those areas already identified by the school in the Action Plan sections

Strengthen those identified areas in the Action Plan sections

Address additional areas identified by the Visiting Committee

Who

What

Why
Sample Complete 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
Evaluate: “Who, What and Why”?

Visiting committee concurs:

• The Leadership Team move forward with the professional development for staff in understanding correlating data with student achievement to deepen their knowledge of how their curricular and instructional choices impact student learning.

In addition, the VC …

• The Leadership Team work to establish and implement a process that will effectively measure the impact of professional development on student learning in order to be able to make informed decisions about allocations of time and resources.
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
What’s the evidence?

Does our writing reflect and have our conversations and writing supported 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**
- Six-Year Accreditation Granted
  - Probation Report and Visit
  - Probationary Accreditation
  - Accreditation Withheld
    - Appeal Process and Visit
    - Reinstatement Process and Visit

**Year 1**
- [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
  - Special Progress Report and/or Visit (if required)

**Year 2**
- Special Visit and/or Report (if required)
  - Special Visit

**Year 3**
- [School Preparing Next Self-Study]

**Year 4**

**Year 5**

**Year 6**
- Next Self-Study

**Next Self-Study**
  - Accreditation Visit (if required)
  - Accreditation Cycle Continues (next visit to be determined)
  - Denied

**Legend:**
- Accredited: 
- Probationary Accreditation: 
- Accreditation Withheld: 

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

*Probationary accreditation status may be appealed.*
Documentation and Justification

Executive summary of the analytical summary of self-study looking at “to what extent” the school meets the criteria plus rationale for status
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
Reflection: How can I best prepare?

What are my priorities?

What are the critical elements for a successful visit?
Not your school
you’re going home

Big Issues

Team

confidential

we NOT me

transparency

learn
We Are Student Centered