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Letter of Introduction

Dear Administrator:

Congratulations and best wishes to you as you begin your accreditation journey. A consultant will be assigned to you to guide you through the steps for preparing to meet the commitments, standards, and for the team visit.

This handbook has been prepared to assist you in planning and preparing for completing the self-study; making assignments for staff, faculty, board; making arrangements for a team visit; filling out forms; and generally walking you through the process. An Administrator’s Checklist has been designed and included as well.

It is our prayer that the ACSI accreditation program will prove to be a helpful process as you press toward the goal of excellence and as you provide an educational program which is thoroughly Christian and of the highest quality. May the Lord bless you and your entire school constituencies as you work together toward this goal.

Please feel free to contact the ACSI Regional Office if you have any questions.

NOTE: There are these and other accreditation resources on our website:
www.acsi.org - select SCHOOL/Accreditation
On the Accreditation Overview page you will find resources at the bottom of the page and links to other resources on the left-hand side.
The ACSI Accreditation Protocol

ACSI views accreditation as an ongoing process of continuous improvement and institutional development by constantly and consistently striving for educational and spiritual excellence. ACSI accreditation is a process of recognizing and assessing educational institutions for their standards, performance, integrity, and quality.

Schools that commit to striving for excellence through accreditation are agreeing to a process of ongoing review to strengthen and improve the effectiveness of the organization and quality of instruction for the population it serves.

ACSI Accreditation Overview

I. How ACSI Accreditation is LIKE Other Accrediting Associations:

A. The purpose of the team visit is to verify the accuracy of the school’s self-study and validate compliance with all commitments and standards.

B. The team is comprised of experienced, professional colleagues who are able to evaluate the school’s effectiveness, make judgments, and prepare commendations and recommendations which will assist the school in its quest for excellence.

C. The team prepares a written report which is presented to the Accreditation Commission.

D. The team submits its recommendation as to whether the school is worthy of accreditation or why it is not.

II. How ACSI May DIFFER From Most Other Accrediting Associations:

A. The ACSI team is comprised of professional educators who have been called by God into the ministry of Christian education. Also, we share this same relationship with the administration, faculty and staff of the school being visited.

(“heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ” Romans 8:17 and “Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers” Galatians 6:10)

B. ACSI team members understand the biblical teaching of being servants and having a servant’s heart. Thusly, our purpose is to serve the host school. Included in this biblical teaching is the need to encourage, affirm, offer praise and, as much as possible, give a good report.

(“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true ...are just ...are of good report ...think on these things” Philippians 4:8 and “Therefore, encourage one another and build each other up...” I Thessalonians 5:11)

C. ACSI team members are not given to criticism or being critical, and do not view their task as seeing how many problems they can find with the school. Team members do not come with an attitude of superiority but come with humility, realizing that whatever we know or whatever experiences or successes we have had are all by God’s grace and mercy.

(“...but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves” Philippians 2:3 and “...clothe yourselves with humility toward one another because God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble” I Peter 5:5)

D. ACSI team members spend much time in prayer as they prepare for the visit, relying heavily on the Holy Spirit for His leading, teaching and wisdom in conducting the visit.

(“If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally...and it shall be given him” James 1:5 and “Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” Colossians 2:3)
E. The ACSI Accreditation Commission has a conviction about practicing biblical ethics and stewardship. Your chairperson has been working closely with the school’s administration for at least a year and, in most cases, two or three years to bring the school to this point of being ready for the team visit. In doing so, he/she has already determined that this school is meeting a majority, if not all, of the standards for accreditation. This is very important because it is our biblical responsibility to assemble a team and have the school incur considerable expense only if it has a reasonable chance of being accredited.

(Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful” I Corinthians 4:2)

OVERVIEW OF THE ACCREDITATION PROCESS

Prior to making application for ACSI accreditation, the school should carefully review the accreditation commitments, standards, non-negotiables, and process. Meeting the commitments, standards, and non-negotiables require a strong commitment by the board, faculty, staff, and school community.

The following steps outline the accreditation process:

1. APPLICATION
   The accreditation application may be obtained from your ACSI Regional Office. The completed application should be returned to the Regional Office with the application fee and a copy of the board minutes indicating approval for the school to pursue accreditation with ACSI.

2. CANDIDATE STATUS VISIT
   Once the accreditation application has been received in the Regional Office, the school will be contacted to establish a date for a candidacy visit. The purpose of this visit is to determine whether or not the school can meet the accreditation standards, complete the self-study, and host a visiting committee within a three-year period. It is also a time for administrators and staff to get their questions answered about the accreditation process and timeline. The ACSI Regional Office is responsible for the expenses associated with this visit.

   The Standards Compliance Grid should be completed by the school at least two weeks prior to the candidacy visit and mailed to the appropriate regional office. The Regional Office will then see that the consultant receives a copy to assist the consultant in planning for the candidacy visit. Please note that this is a first cursory overview, you may not be meeting all the standards completely for the candidacy visit – this form is used as a starting point. Once candidate status has been granted, the school will receive official notification from the ACSI Regional Office and a consultant will be assigned to work with the school. Often the assigned consultant will also be the chair of the visiting team.

3. CONSULTANT
   The consultant assigned to the school has been trained in the many components of the ACSI accreditation protocol. The consultant serves as a resource person throughout the self-study process. All expenses incurred by the consultant in serving the school are paid by the school.

4. TEAM VISIT
   Upon completion of the self-study, a committee of Christian school educators and administrators is scheduled to visit the school. The number of committee members depends on the size of the school, the number of grades, and the number of campuses involved. The length of the visit is approximately three and a half days. The school is responsible for all the expenses of travel and of hosting the visiting committee members.
5. **REGIONAL ACCREDITATION COMMISSION**
   At the conclusion of the visit, the committee’s report will be forwarded to the ACSI Regional Director. The report will be reviewed at the appropriate meeting of the ACSI Regional Accreditation Commission, and action will be taken on the status of the school’s accreditation. The school is then notified of the Commission’s decision.
CHECKLIST FOR SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR

A. BEFORE THE COMMITTEE VISIT

1. Secure a copy of the ACSI School Accreditation Manual: REACH
2. Carefully study the Commitments and Standards for ACSI Accreditation.
   a. Note that all commitments and standards must be met prior to a team visit
   b. Note the ACSI administrator and faculty certification requirements (where appropriate) for schools desiring to be accredited by ACSI.
   c. Obtain ACSI certification application forms from ACSI Certification Office by calling (719) 528-1201, Faxing (719) 531-0631, or downloading forms from the ACSI website at {www.acsi.org}.
3. Submit your school’s application for accreditation.
   a. Include fee to the appropriate ACSI Regional or International Ministries Office.
   b. Send a copy of board resolution indicating your board’s interest in participating in ACSI’s program of accreditation to the appropriate ACSI Regional or International Ministries Office.
   c. Indicate grades and location of plant site(s) to be covered by accreditation.
   d. Indicate your board’s interest in applying for dual accreditation with any additional accreditation body (optional).

B. THE YEAR OF THE VISIT

1. Together with your chairperson determine the preferred dates for the visitation.
2. Schedule an onsite meeting with the Visiting Committee chairperson/consultant 6-9 months prior to the visitation.

   a. The chairperson’s expenses are to be assumed by the host school, e.g. travel and meals.
   b. Be prepared to complete the ACSI Pre-Accreditation Compliance Grid with the chairperson.

   (1) The school must be in compliance with all commitments and standards at the time of the visit.
   c. Request any needed assistance from your chairperson while conducting your school’s self-study.
   d. Work backward from visitation dates, setting a workable timetable for school staff.
Prepare, with your chairperson, an hour-by-hour schedule for the committee visit.

3. Appoint a chairperson for your steering committee.
   a. The administrator may be the chairperson, or he/she may want to appoint a faculty member to assume this important role. This person will function as the school accreditation coordinator.
   b. The steering committee will be made up of the chairperson of each subcommittee and the school’s administrator.

4. Appoint subcommittees for each section of the instrument, with at least 2-3 people serving on each committee. Involve board members and parents when appropriate.

5. Set weekly meetings of the steering committee, thus checking the progress of each committee.

6. Subcommittee reports:
   a. Upon completion, the report must be read to, and approved by, the entire staff.
   b. Edited to meet the approval of all.
   c. When completed, are submitted to typist well in advance of the deadline.
   d. The typist continues to compile each section as approved by the steering committee.

7. The steering committee continues to see that the self-study is completed as requested.
   a. All responses are stated thoroughly and completely.
   b. All attached data is collected and included.
   c. All supplied data is compiled and available for the committee at the time of the visit.

8. If your school is participating in an accreditation renewal, prepare an update progress report showing how your school has acted upon all the recommendations of the visiting committee at your last full visit. This progress report should be placed in the front of the completed self-study.

9. If your school is involved in a joint process, review the joint accrediting agency’s criteria and complete any joint accreditation supplement that may be required.

10. As you complete your school self-study:
    a. Remember to number the pages of the self-study.
    b. Include a table of contents.
c. Include index tabs identifying the sections of your school’s self-study.
d. Bind the instrument together in a large notebook/3-ring binder, etc.

11. Communicate with the chairperson at least 6 weeks prior to the committee visit.
   a. Be prepared to show that the steering committee and the subcommittees are ready for the scheduled committee visit.
      (1) Verify that all ACSI commitments and standards have been met
      (2) Send a copy of completed checklist to the chairperson.
      (3) Assure that the self-study will be completed on time.
   b. Work with the chairperson in preparing an hour-by-hour schedule for the committee visit.
   c. Communicate hotel/motel arrangements, meals, etc. ACSI strongly recommends adequate, but not expensive, single rooms for the visiting committee members.
   d. Furnish campus layout, bell schedules, map to school locations, etc.
   e. Confirm the location of workroom for the committee.
   f. Arrange for a typist (if requested) with strong word processing skills to be available during the on-campus visitation.
      (1) The typist should work in a separate location to that of the committee.
      (2) If possible, the typist should be isolated from administrator, teacher, parent, and student interruptions.
      (3) The work of the typist during the visit is strictly confidential. It should not be shared with anyone other than the visiting committee.
   g. Ask any necessary questions for clarification prior to the committee’s arrival.

12. The administrator is to send copies (preferably electronic) of the completed self-study to the appropriate parties.
   a. One (1) copy to each visiting committee member, including chair.
   b. One (1) copy to the appropriate ACSI Regional or International Ministries Office.
   c. One (1) copy to the additional accrediting body office (joint visits only).
   d. All self-studies are to be sent no later than 3 weeks in advance of
the scheduled visit in order to give adequate preparation time to the committee.

(1) If completed copies of the self-study have not been received by committee members at least 2 weeks prior to the scheduled visit; the committee chairperson is expected to postpone the visit to the school.

C. DURING THE COMMITTEE’S ON-CAMPUS VISIT

1. Plan to entertain the committee as your guests.
2. Be prepared for a friendly, helpful committee who are on campus to assist you in improving your school.
3. Do not plan time-consuming events, which hinder the progress of the work of the committee, but do continue a normal schedule during the visit.
4. The committee will appreciate the time saved by serving meals on campus, e.g., school cafeteria, home economics department (where possible), mother’s group, etc.
5. The committee will need the privacy of a workroom that is separate from the faculty room or the school library.
6. Data to be supplied items should be delivered to the workroom for the committee.
7. Coffee, etc., can be made available to the committee in the workroom.
8. Instruct the typist (if requested) to be ready to go to work upon the arrival of the committee.
9. Pay the expenses of the visiting committee before they leave your campus.
10. On the last day of the visit the chairperson will read the committee report to you at a closed meeting.
   a. They will invite your response to the school self-study.
   b. They will also consider items of strength or weakness that you might like to see included in the committee report.
11. Before the committee leaves the school, the report may also be read at an open meeting, if you wish.
   a. As the administrator of the school you should invite those who are to attend this meeting.
   b. There is to be no response to the committee report at this meeting.

D. FOLLOWING THE VISIT OF THE COMMITTEE

1. A completed copy of the Visiting Committee Report could be in your hands as early as the last day of the visit. If the chairperson feels that additional editing is necessary, he will have the completed copy (rough draft) to you no later than three (3) weeks after the visit.
2. The school self study report and the visiting committee report will be submitted to the appropriate ACSI Commission at its annual meeting.

3. Following the meeting of the Commission you will be notified by the appropriate ACSI Regional or International Ministries Office concerning the school’s accreditation.

4. Accredited schools receive an appropriate ACSI framed certificate signifying the accreditation of the school.
   a. Additional certificates may be ordered for the school at an additional expense.

5. A midterm visit (may be required). The length and size will be determined by the regional commission. Typically, they are a one day visit with a two-member team.

6. An annual report is required of each accredited school, except the year of the midterm visit and the year of the full self-study.
The following grid should be completed by the school at least two weeks prior to the candidacy visit and mailed to the appropriate regional office. The Regional Office will then see that the consultant receives a copy to assist the consultant in planning for the candidacy visit. Please note that this is a first cursory overview, you may not be meeting all the standards completely for the candidacy visit – this form is used as a starting point.
Standard One: The school/program has developed written statements of philosophy, vision, mission, beliefs, and core values, as well as a statement of faith. These statements are well defined and systematically reviewed. They outline the school’s/program’s Christian distinctive and communicate a clear purpose and direction for school effectiveness and student/child growth and development.

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Explanation of why non-compliance is checked:

Standard Two: Christ-centered governance and administrative leadership that promotes effectiveness of the school/program and growth of the student/child through an established structure contributes to a well-managed and operationally and financially sound Christian educational institution. The administrative leadership and governing body work in partnership to ensure the integrity, effectiveness, and reputation of the institution through the establishment of written policies and procedures. The governance policies are implemented by the staff who are guided by operational policies and procedures developed by the administration. The administrator is the instructional leader of the school, and he or she supervises all faculty and staff.

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Explanation of why non-compliance is checked:
Standard Three: The school/program exists and functions as an institution of reliability and authority by exhibiting a pattern of respect, trust, accountability, and dignity to its constituents, both internally and externally. Effective communication and relationships are fostered with constituents, as well as among constituents. A wide range of strategies are used to incorporate involvement by the parents and the community. It is expected that the school/program meets the educational and developmental needs of the students/children it enrolls. Services at the appropriate levels include guidance (both academically and personally) and student activities (curricular and co-curricular). Appropriate resources and planning occur to ensure that the mission, vision, and philosophy are being carried out to meet the expected outcomes.

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Explanation of why non-compliance is checked:

Standard Four: All personnel are Christians. They are competent and dedicated and are well qualified for their assigned responsibilities. They are committed to the written philosophy, mission, vision, and core values, and they engage in ongoing professional development that will assist in the process of continual growth in student learning and the educational course of the school/program. The administrative, instructional, and support staff are sufficient in number to provide for the effective delivery of quality education and are appropriately credentialed, degreed, trained, and qualified for their assigned duties.

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Standard Five: The instructional program consists of carefully developed, thoroughly documented, and well-executed curriculum elements that include educational philosophy, schoolwide outcomes, a variety of effective instructional strategies, adequate resources, and appropriate assessments that are based on research and quality practices. The curriculum of the school/program is driven by well-written policies and procedures. It is sufficiently funded, collaboratively reviewed on a regular basis, and compiled using the school’s mission, vision, and core values to ensure a biblical foundation for instruction. A method for assessing the effectiveness of learning outcomes is in place.

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Explanation of why non-compliance is checked:
**Standard Six:** The library, media, and technology services exist to carry out the mission of the school/program by supporting the instructional program with ample and appropriate print, media, and technology resources as well as qualified staff to provide effective services to students/children, staff, and parents. A long-range plan for technology should be developed.

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**Explanation of why non-compliance is checked:**

**Standard Seven:** The entire campus is a safe, healthy, and nurturing environment for teaching and learning. Well-written policies and procedures are in place to ensure the health of the students/children—emotionally, physically, spiritually, and academically. Safety procedures are clear and well documented. Food services policies and nutritional information are clearly articulated and posted if food is served on the premises. A well-developed crisis plan is in place, and the faculty and staff have been trained appropriately to handle various emergency situations. Regular drills and practices occur to assist in preparation for crisis events.

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**Explanation of why non-compliance is checked:**
Standard Eight: Facilities—made up of the grounds, all buildings, and equipment—provide a safe, well-maintained physical environment that supports optimal student development and academic growth. The school/program facilities (buildings and grounds) are appropriate in size, furnishings, and space to meet the stated philosophy, mission, and vision. Transportation guidelines for the staff and the students/children are developed, and written policies and procedures are in place.

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Explanation of why non-compliance is checked:

Standard Nine: The school/program shall provide for spiritual nurture and discipleship of its students/children. The spiritual nurturing and discipleship should be planned, intentional, and systematic in implementation. Instruction in Bible is foundational to developing a biblical worldview, but it must be supplemented by mentoring and discipleship experiences. Children and students are given opportunities to serve others and develop a Christlike attitude toward the poor, needy, and vulnerable. Spiritual formation assessment is part of the ongoing life of the school/program.

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Explanation of why non-compliance is checked:
**Standard Ten:** The school/program shall develop and annually update a continuous school improvement plan (CSIP) that includes specific long-range and short-range goals and plans; strategies for reaching these goals; and assessment, analysis, and reporting procedures to determine whether the goals have been achieved. This plan must have significant focus on how it will promote quality, effective learning for all students/children; organizational growth; and accomplishment of the schoolwide learning goals that are based on the philosophy, mission, vision, and core values.

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**Explanation of why non-compliance is checked:**
The Role & Function of the Faculty & Staff
In the ACSI Accreditation Process

Success in completing the self-study and accomplishing accreditation is dependent on the investment of time and energy by the entire faculty, staff, and school community. The chief administrator assumes the role of leadership in the accreditation process; however, support is need from the faculty, staff, board and school community. There are many responsibilities that must be delegated to the faculty to accomplish the major goal of accreditation and school improvement. It is imperative for that the entire school community is involved in the self-study process.

As school improvement is an ongoing process, each faculty, staff, and the entire school community should realize that initial accreditation is only the first phase. A continuous plan for school improvement and growth in student learning should be ongoing. Students are the ultimate beneficiaries of the accreditation process. When the entire school is aligned and focused on a shared vision for student learning, students win.

1. EXAMINATION OF PHILOSOPHY, GOALS, & MISSION
   The faculty as a whole should examine the stated philosophy, goals, and mission of the school in relationship to its programs. The philosophy, goals, and mission must be examined in light of the Scriptures to ensure that the foundational principles of the school are compatible with the biblical mandates for Christian education.

2. STEERING COMMITTEE APPOINTMENT
   A steering committee, which is responsible for the overall management and completion of the self-study, should be established. The administrator is usually a member of this committee, though not necessarily the chairperson. A vital function of the steering committee is to develop and follow a timetable for the completion of the self-study. Realistically, at least a year should be allowed for the self-study process.

3. SELF-STUDY SUBCOMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS
   Subcommittees are established for the self-study, and assignments are made for each section of the Manual, including the areas of the instructional program. After subcommittee assignments have been made, each subcommittee should carefully review and study its assigned section. It is imperative for each member of a subcommittee to be thorough, yet concise, in completing his/her assigned tasks. When the report is completed to the satisfaction of the subcommittee, it should then be presented to the steering committee for its consideration and evaluation. The steering committee may make recommendations to the subcommittee concerning the report before it is presented to the entire faculty and staff for final approval.

4. FACULTY, STAFF, & BOARD READINGS
   It is important that the total faculty, staff, board, and school community come to consensus concerning the findings of the self-study. For this reason each section of the self-study should be considered in its final form by the entire faculty, staff, board, and school community. Regularly scheduled meetings should be arranged for presentations by each of the assigned subcommittees.

5. DURING THE VISITING COMMITTEE’S VISIT
   The responsibility of the faculty during the visit is to be themselves, as much as possible, when the committee members are visiting the classrooms. Visiting committee members are not evaluating individual teachers but are getting a sense of the instructional quality of the school program. The staff is to respond candidly in interviews but not seek to air problems or issues with the visiting committee.
6. **AFTER ACCREDITATION**
   a. The school should carefully read the entire visiting committee report while giving special attention to the sections most closely associated with their responsibilities and to any major recommendations.
   
   b. A plan of action based on the insights of the visiting committee and the subcommittees should be developed and communicated to the school constituency. The plan should include recommendations from the visiting committee report and items from the schools School Improvement Plan.
   
   c. The school must respond to the major recommendations in the visiting committee report as well as to all recommendations in the report and the findings of the subcommittees.
   
   d. An annual report is filed with the ACSI Regional Office.
   
   e. ACSI accreditation commitments, standards, and non-negotiables must be maintained and a continuous effort to address the recommendations of the visiting committee report is expected as a part of being an accredited school.
   
   f. An application for renewal of accreditation must be made in the next to last year of the term of accreditation. The school may choose, in consultation with the ACSI Regional Director, to use the ASP instrument, which is a project based approach to accreditation, or go through the traditional accreditation protocol.

**HOW TO PREPARE THE FACULTY AND STAFF FOR THE TEAM VISIT**
(Suggestions for Administrators)

The more the school administrator has done to prepare his/her school staff, faculty and board members for the accreditation visit, the more effective the visit. The following are a few suggestions.

1. From the very beginning of the process (even before the self-study has been started) everyone should be informed of the requirements as well as the procedures for achieving accreditation. This includes the inviting of a competent experienced team of Christian school teachers and administrators to the campus.

2. The purpose of the team visit should also be made clear.
   
   a. To validate the school’s Self-study. That is to confirm that the perceived strengths and weaknesses which are set forth in the Self-study are true and perceived by the on-site visit, (conference, interviews, observations, etc.)
   
   b. To determine if school policies, procedures and programs are in accordance with the school’s purpose or mission.
   
   c. To confirm **quality Christian** education in light of stated goals and objectives. It should be noted that the visiting team does not attempt to change the direction or purposes of the school or to compare your school with other accredited schools, but simply to determine that the school is making the best use of its resources.

3. It is good to remind the staff that the team members come in a spirit of desiring to be helpful. They are brothers and sisters in Christ and professional colleagues with similar interests and goals (Christ-centered education). The ultimate goal of the team is to glorify Christ and strengthen the ministry of Christian school education by sharing their expertise. Each team member desires to be sensitive to the Holy Spirit. In so many cases, the team members feel they have “received” more than they have “given”.

4. Challenge the staff to pray for the team members, even months before the team comes to the campus.
5. It is good for the staff to know in advance who the team members will be and the schools they represent.

6. Be sure the teachers know it is “school as usual” when the team is on campus. It is very important for the teachers to adhere to the daily teaching schedule which has been given to the team. No special programs are to be developed or special classroom preparations need to be made. Team members want to see typical classrooms and typical lessons. However, the giving of tests, showing films or any other special events are inappropriate for the days the team visits.

7. The teacher should know that an attempt will be made to visit every classroom twice, but the purpose is not to evaluate individual teachers. No teacher’s name will appear in the report. The purpose of classroom visits is to determine quality education on the part of the total school.

8. The teachers and office staff may expect to be interviewed individually and or collectively. Department interviews will also be held.

9. Request teachers to explain the visit to their students so they too will know why visitors are on the campus.

10. Encourage the staff to participate in the fellowship or refreshment times to get to know the team members. This greatly helps to lessen the tension as they perceive the genuine, sincere interest of the team members.

11. Encourage the staff to share freely and honestly with the team and to be as cordial as possible since this free and open dialogue is what will make the accreditation process work. This positive approach will result in a report which will be extremely pertinent and helpful to the school. (Again, remind the staff that all discussions are confidential and no names appear in the report.)

12. Be sure your staff knows that the quality and completeness of the Self-study is the key to the visit. The visit is based upon the Self-study and the study will guide the team members in the evaluation process.

13. It would be good for your staff to know that the visit will result in a written report in which the team, collectively, will make commendations and recommendations on each section of the Self-study and that the purpose of this report is to give an objective appraisal upon which future goals can be set by the school staff, administrators and school board.
Sample Organizational Timeline/Schedule

A timeline should be developed to reflect the following:

1. Beginning date of the self-study.
2. Deadline for preliminary data and documentation gathering.
3. Meetings dates of steering and subcommittees.
4. Dates for completion of the committee reports.
5. Final date for review and reading of committee reports.
6. Final date for completion of self-study report.
7. Date for completing the final review of the self-study report.
8. Schedule of final visit of consultant to verify school is ready for visit.
9. Target date for sending final draft to visiting committee chair.
10. Mailing of self-study at least three weeks prior to the team visit.
11. Scheduled visit of the visiting accreditation team.
Overview of School/Program Responsibilities

Success in completing the self-study and in accomplishing accreditation depends on the investment of time and energy by the entire faculty and staff. The chief administrator/early education director assumes a major role in the leadership of the process; however, support is needed from the faculty and the board. Many responsibilities must be delegated to the faculty to accomplish the major goal of accreditation: school improvement. It is also imperative that the governing body/steering committee members and others be involved in the self-study process.

1. Examination of Philosophy, Goals, and Mission
The faculty as a whole should examine the stated philosophy, goals, and mission of the school/program in relationship to the programs and services it offers. The philosophy, goals, and mission must be examined in light of the Scriptures to ensure that the foundational principles of the school/program are compatible with the biblical mandates for Christian education.

2. Steering Committee Appointment
A steering committee, which is responsible for the overall management and completion of the self-study, should be established. The administrator/early education director is usually a member of this committee, though not necessarily the chairperson. A vital function of the steering committee is to develop and follow a timetable for the completion of the self-study. Realistically, at least a year should be allowed for the self-study process.

3. Self-Study Subcommittee Assignments
Subcommittees must be established for the self-study, and assignments must be made for each section of the accreditation manual and for the areas of the instructional program. After subcommittee assignments have been made, each subcommittee should carefully review and study its assigned section. It is imperative that each member of a subcommittee be thorough, yet concise, in completing his or her assigned tasks. When the report is completed to the satisfaction of the self-study subcommittee, it should then be presented to the steering committee for its consideration and evaluation.

The steering committee may make recommendations to the subcommittee concerning the report before it is presented to the entire faculty and staff for final approval. One product of the committee report is a list of the major strengths and goals established for improvement and growth. These goals for improvement may be identified later by the steering committee as major areas for improvement as a schoolwide or programwide priority for Standard Ten. However, even if they are not incorporated as a portion of the major plans for improvement for Standard Ten, the plans for improvement in the subcommittee report are useful as annual goals.

4. Faculty, Staff, and Board Readings
It is important that the entire faculty, staff, and board come to a consensus concerning the findings of the self-study. For this reason, each section of the self-study should be considered in its final form by the entire faculty and staff. In regularly scheduled meetings, each of the assigned subcommittees should give presentations.

5. During the Visiting Committee’s Visit
The responsibility of the faculty during the visit is to be themselves, as much as possible, when the committee members are visiting the classrooms. Visiting committee members are not there to evaluate individual teachers but to get a sense of the instructional quality of the school program. The staff should respond candidly in interviews but should not seek to air problems or issues with the visiting committee.

6. After Accreditation
After accreditation, the school/program must do the following:

a. The staff should read carefully the entire visiting committee report while giving special attention to the sections most closely associated with their responsibilities and to any major recommendations.
b. A plan of action based on the insights of the visiting committee and the subcommittees should be developed and communicated to the constituency. The plan should include recommendations from the visiting committee report and items from the continuous school improvement plan section of the self-study.

c. The school/program must respond to the major recommendations in the visiting committee report as well as ultimately to all recommendations in the report and the findings of the subcommittees.

d. An annual report must be filed with the ACSI regional office or the ACSI International Ministries office (please refer to appendix C). An interim report is due at the midpoint of the accreditation term.

e. ACSI accreditation commitments and standards must be maintained, and a continuous effort to address the recommendations of the visiting committee report is expected of an accredited school/program.

f. An application for a renewal of accreditation must be made in the next to last year of the term of accreditation.

Responsibilities of the School and Writing the Self-Study

Writing the self-study is the critical ingredient in maximizing the value of the accreditation process. The self-study is foundational, addressing all the other components of the process. Therefore, it requires the best efforts of the faculty to prepare an accurate, complete, and well-written document. Rubrics have been developed for the school’s/program’s use in making evaluations of the school’s/program’s status in regard to the commitments and standards for accreditation.

Three Basic Commitments to the Successful Self-Study:

1. A willingness to invest the necessary time, effort, and cost.
2. The complete support of all the faculty, staff, and school community.
3. A commitment to make any changes that the study shows to be needed for the betterment of the school and student learning.

The steering committee generally serves as the editorial committee for the self-study, but the committee’s time will be spent best in thinking carefully about the responses submitted for each commitment and standard. The chairperson of each subcommittee for the self-study sections should be the first line of quality control in this process. Nothing less than a high-quality effort should be acceptable.

1. The self-study should have the following in its opening:
   a. A title page identifying the school/program and the document
   b. A list of all the committee personnel who have worked on the self-study, identifying each person’s relationship to the committee
   c. A one-to-two-page summary of the profile and history of the school

2. Each section of the accreditation manual begins with an accreditation standard related to an area that one subcommittee will evaluate. The standard is followed by the rationale and guidelines associated with the standard. Next are the indicators that give direction to the school/program on what should be evidenced in meeting the standard. Rubrics and indicators for each standard have been developed to assist groups in determining compliance with each section. Finally, the subcommittee will assemble the responses into a complete document.

3. Responses should be in narrative style. Answers should be clear and well written. Each subcommittee report should use the same formatting.
4. The school/program is required to submit supplementary data. Some data should be included at the end of a particular section of the self-study. Other data should be supplied to the visiting committee when it visits the school/program. Any questions about supplementary data may be discussed with the consultant before the visit.

5. At the conclusion of the visit, recommendations from the school/program for improving the ACSI accreditation protocol or process are to be completed by a consensus of the administrator(s) and the faculty. The information should be submitted to the ACSI Office of Academic Affairs. This information will be used as input when the accreditation documents are revised approximately every five to seven years.

**Work Assignments for the Self-Study Subcommittees**

The most beneficial part of the accreditation process is the self-study, which is conducted by subcommittees that review, analyze, and evaluate every area of the school’s program. *REACH: Accreditation Manual for EE–12 North American and International Schools* provides a framework and a set of rubrics to guide the subcommittees through the process. The function of the subcommittees is to accomplish the following:

1. Determine for each area what evidence is necessary to provide a concise, yet complete and accurate, response. For questions seeking analysis of quality or effectiveness, the subcommittee should investigate “what is” through observation, interviews, portfolios, or other evidence. The subcommittee should not assume that what is put forth as the curriculum, policies, and programs of the school/program is what is actually experienced by the students/children. The subcommittee needs to investigate what is actually being implemented by the administration, taught by the faculty, and experienced by the children, students, and parents. After all relevant information has been collected, the subcommittee synthesizes the evidence and records “what is” by giving a summary response.

2. On the basis of its determination of “what is,” the subcommittee compares its findings with the school’s/program’s Christian philosophy and statement of objectives, including the learning expectations. The subcommittee determines “what should be” by discussing each area that requires an appraisal. The subcommittee should seek to reach consensus.

3. The concluding portion of each self-study section asks the subcommittee to identify areas of strengths and goals where improvements are most needed. **First**, the subcommittee should clearly indicate whether it believes the accreditation standard for the section is being met by the school/program and can continue to be met during the accreditation period. **Second**, the subcommittee identifies the areas of greatest strength and the most needed improvements. This list must be supportable from the responses provided in the subcommittee’s report. The process should be managed by the subcommittee chairpersons in such a way that there is a variety of input, discussion, and suggestions before the report is finalized and submitted. The subcommittee’s report is submitted to the steering committee for its review. The steering committee evaluates the report for accuracy, completeness, and thoroughness. Once approved by the steering committee, the report is read to the full faculty for their comments and input. Their suggestions are reviewed and incorporated.

4. The report is then resubmitted to the steering committee. The steering committee then accumulates the data that should be attached to the report. (This is to be done in such a way that the report and the accompanying data may be compiled and sent as one document.)
Data that will be made available to the visiting team should be finalized and organized for display. Each document must be clearly labeled according to what section of the self-study it addresses. Copies of the self-study must be made for all members of the visiting team and mailed to them three weeks prior to the visit. The steering committee displays the appropriate data available for the visiting team.

The following are some suggested subcommittees and a brief description of their duties in preparation for the self-study:

**Philosophy and Foundations** (governing body member, administrator/early education director, faculty member, parent, pastor, mission representative)

- Reviews and evaluates the school’s philosophy
- Identifies the strengths and weaknesses of the philosophy
- Makes suggestions for improvement

**Governance and Administrative Leadership** (Governing Body, Administrative Leadership, Admissions, Finance secretary, admissions director, administrator/early education director, governing body member, faculty member, community member, financial officer)

- Reviews the policies and practices of admissions
- Evaluates literature that is given out to align practices with the philosophy
- Evaluates the quality of the work of the governing body
- Indicates how governing body members are chosen and trained and how they serve
- Determines how the budget is developed, managed, and adjusted
- Verifies financial integrity and the standards for accreditation
- Assesses the amount of funds required to operate and the sources of the funds

Home and Community Relations and Student Services (parent, student leader, guidance counselor, teacher, parent-teacher organization representative)

- Analyzes the constituency and evaluates it in light of the philosophy, mission, and purposes
- Makes an appraisal of the impact on the community
- Describes the activities program
- Describes and evaluates the guidance services
- Appraises the adequacy with which the school/program serves the students/children who have special needs
- Determines the effectiveness of the community network to provide services for students/children who have special needs and their families

**Personnel** (faculty member, administrator/early education director, governing body member)

- Does a statistical study regarding the staff’s terms of service, training, and experience
- Evaluates the adequacy of the staff for the number of students/children and activities
- Reviews the job descriptions for all staff
- Verifies that the faculty and the staff meet the certification requirements

**Instructional Program** (faculty member, administrator/early education director, governing body member, parent, student leader)

- Observes for age-appropriate instructional strategies at all age/grade levels
- Reviews curricular resources for alignment with the philosophy of the school/program
- Reviews the curriculum guide/plan and mapping to ascertain the degree to which it is successfully implemented by the teaching staff
Library, Media, and Technology Services (librarian, faculty members from all school levels, community member, administrator/early education director, technology coordinator)
- Determines how the media center serves the students and the staff
- Evaluates the holdings and the services available
- Appraises the circulation of books, media, and software
- Reviews how current the media center is in technology and related information services
- Considers the appropriateness when using passive media with young children

Crisis Planning, Safety, Health, and Food/Nutrition Services (faculty member, community member, coach, student organization leader, administrator/early education director, nurse, secretary, food services personnel)
- Evaluates the adequacy of personnel, facilities, equipment, funding, etc.
- Describes how the health and safety of the children is provided for
- Assesses the compliance with local, state, provincial, and federal codes
- Identifies the crisis management plan of the school
- Identifies how the food services/nutrition program is managed and financed

Facilities, Environment, and Transportation (administrator/early education director, community member, sponsor, driver, faculty member)
- Describes the program of student transportation
- Evaluates the facilities in light of the size and programs of the school/program
- Determines the adequacy of the facilities and describes any needs
- Appraises the adequacy of each specialty room
- Identifies facilities that are needed
- Observes the degree to which the environment supports the needs of learners

Character, Values, and Spiritual Development of Students (parent, student leader, guidance counselor, teachers, administrator/early education director)
- Reviews every aspect of the school/program to ascertain the priority of spiritual formation
- Observes to ensure the age-appropriate expectations for spiritual development
- Evaluates the opportunities for service

Committee Work Involving All Staff

Administrative and Instructional Staff Sheet

The staff member sheet gives general spiritual qualifications, academic training, professional affiliations, and certification information for each member of the teaching staff.

Instructional Program

The steering committee will generally complete the introductory section of each school division. Teachers will be assigned to complete a section of the instructional program.

In the elementary school, sections will be completed for every subject, such as Bible, language, math, reading/phonics, science/health, social studies, spelling, art, handwriting, music, physical education, kindergarten, and computer. In the early education program, teachers will be assigned to review all curricular plans for a specific age group.
In the junior high/middle school and high school, each department will complete a section. This work will include subjects such as Bible, foreign language, fine arts, math, science, social studies, computer, and physical education. Schools should consider forming interdisciplinary subcommittees to promote improved understanding of objectives (including school-wide objectives), methodologies, priorities, and perspectives between departments.

Early education programs and classrooms naturally tend to implement the curricular plans in an interdisciplinary fashion (content delivery across subject areas). Observations will verify this approach. Some regional accrediting agencies will expect this process in a joint accreditation effort.
Annual Statement of Financial Practices

School ________________________________
Address ________________________________
Phone ( ) __________________ Fax ( ) ____________
E-mail ________________________________

Review for financial year starting ___________ Ending ___________

This report is to be completed annually by ACSI accredited schools/programs. It supplements the Annual Accreditation Report. Individual completing this report must be independent from the school (not a board member, spouse of a teacher or board member, or a school parent).

Check yes or no after each of the questions below. If you check no, please comment on the reason for the variance from accepted practices.

I. Cash Receipts
A. Are checks and currency recorded and accounted for on a daily basis? Yes _____ No _____
B. Are there adequate physical controls over cash from receipt to deposit? Yes_____ No _____
C. Are donations of cash and property properly documented, including proper receipting to the donor? Yes _____ No _____

II. Cash Disbursements
A. Are all invoices (requests for payment) paid in a timely manner? Yes _____ No _____
B. Are all unpaid invoices, etc., accounted for and analyzed for due dates? Yes_____ No _____

III. Cash: General
A. Are all check signers approved by the governing body or an appropriate and responsible official? Yes _____ No _____
B. Are bank accounts reconciled within a timely period after the end of each month and reviewed by a knowledgeable, responsible official? Yes_____ No _____
C. Are there appropriate spending approval limits set for different levels of authority within the school (i.e., secretary, treasurer, director, board)? Yes _____ No _____

IV. Accounts Receivable
A. Are monthly statements mailed for all receivables? Yes _____ No _____
B. Are receivables aged each month and reviewed for past-due accounts? Yes _____ No _____
C. Are delinquent accounts followed up for collection? Yes _____ No _____

V. Financial Reporting
A. Are all financial transactions recorded in a timely manner? Yes_____ No _____
B. Is proper documentation maintained for all financial transactions? Yes_____ No _____
C. Does the school prepare periodic financial reports? Does someone outside the accounting/bookkeeping function review these reports? Yes ______ No ______

D. Is there a formal budgeting process? Yes ______ No ______

E. Are budgets periodically reviewed and compared with actual results? Yes ______ No ______

F. Does the governing body and/or the finance subcommittee keep up-to-date with statements of income and expenditures? Yes ______ No ______

VI. General Comments
Please make any comments that you wish to add relating to the financial procedures and practices of the school/program.

Declaration
I have performed the inquiry and analytical procedures that provide me with a reasonable basis for expressing limited assurance that there are no material modifications that should be made to this school’s/program’s financial statements in order for them to be in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles, except as noted in the Annual Statement of Financial Practices.

Signature of chairman or secretary of the governing body ________________________________

Signature of person completing the statement ________________________________

Administrator’s or director’s name/signature ________________________________
Curriculum/Mapping Guide
(Elementary and Secondary)

Please note that early education support documents can be found online.

A quality school places a high priority on the continuous development of its instructional program and the documentation that guides that program. At each grade level taught and in each secondary course, an instructional program includes far more than the contents of any textbook. The curriculum guide/plan is a description of what is taught throughout the school, and as such (1) describes the school’s instructional program, (2) helps to ensure continuity between grade levels and subject areas, and (3) provides a basis for evaluation of the school’s instructional program.

It is understood that the guide/plan development process takes time and that it is revisited on a regular basis to keep it effective and applicable. While the initial development of a site-specific curriculum document will take several years, the true value is found in the ongoing revisit of those documents, the adjustment and revision that keep them current, and the updating in response to new educational research, instructional trends, and emerging content. As a school matures and adjusts its instructional program, the curriculum guide/plan must change as well, reflecting improvements to instruction, changes in supportive materials, and expansion of the school’s integrative component.

A well-documented curriculum guide/plan provides guidance to new teachers, and it is the basis for revisions to the instructional program, including the selection of the most appropriate textbooks and supplemental materials. In this respect, it is a tool to ease the work of the teacher. A school’s curriculum guide/plan should be a collaborative effort of teachers in the same department or grade level as well as those above and below it. Members of the faculty at other levels should review the guide for a given level. A separate curriculum guide/plan should be developed for each school division. A curriculum guide/plan must be complete enough to be useful, and it must be organized in a manner that is consistent and practical.

The following list of components for each core instructional area* should be included in the curriculum guide/plan. For initial accreditation, these items are required to complete the curriculum guide/plan for the instructional program standard:

• Introduction and educational philosophy, including the biblical basis for each course: The introduction and educational philosophy is a narrative statement that includes the subject or grade level for which the curriculum guide/plan is designed, the school’s approach to that subject, the biblical foundation for teaching this subject, and any suggestions that might help the users of the guide with this course or content.

• Scope and sequence (or map) of instruction for each subject area at each grade level: The scope and sequence of instruction indicates the breadth of the content to be taught and the order in which it will be taught.

• Time frame for each instructional component (i.e., course and units): The time frame specifies the amount of time spent on each course or for each unit of instruction.

• Overall instructional goals for each course: The instructional goals identify the general objectives of large blocks of instruction, such as yearlong or semester courses.

• Resources, including textbooks: The required and supplemental instructional materials that are a part of the instructional program are specified.

• Integrative elements: The integrative elements are the key biblical, Christian worldview or scriptural concepts used to tie the content to the school’s Christian mission and spiritual formation outcomes. Rather than a list of Bible verses, these elements should be connective concepts that make appropriate references between content and the school’s Christian distinctive.
Core instructional areas are defined as Bible, language arts (reading, English, literature, grammar, and composition), mathematics, science, and social studies.

The following items should be added as the school completes the development of its curriculum guides/plans, and progress must be reported in the school’s annual report.

- **Specific instructional objectives for each unit.** Specific instructional objectives are the skills or concepts a student attains when the instruction of a unit or a lesson is completed.

- **Instructional methods.** Instructional methods are the techniques used by a teacher for instruction (e.g., hands-on activities, peer tutoring, discussion, experimentation, learning centers, debates, role-playing, drill, and practice) that are adapted to the learning styles of the students.

- **Evaluation/assessment techniques.** Evaluation/assessment techniques are the procedures used to measure the stated instructional objectives, including observations, portfolios, projects, demonstrations, reports, and oral and written tests. Caution should be used to avoid a boilerplate approach that replicates identical techniques across all grades. The assessments must be applicable, specific, and appropriate to the grade and the content.

- **State standards alignment.** State standards alignment is aligning with local or state instructional standards to ensure continuity for students entering or leaving the school while maintaining connectivity to the instructional context in which the school functions. While most Christian schools are not mandated to follow state or local frameworks, some alignment, or at the very least, some reference to them is beneficial.

**Curriculum Mapping**

With the development of curriculum mapping as a documentation strategy, a well-produced instructional map—whether hard copy, electronic, or Web-based—can satisfy most of the required elements listed above. Care must be taken to ensure that a school’s curriculum maps contain the essential elements required for accreditation and that they provide the documentation of biblical integrative components of the school’s programs.

An effective curriculum map will allow for the overview of subject content, objectives or outcomes, resources, and alignment with school-defined or state frameworks while spreading that content over the time frame of the instructional year or unit, depending on the depth of the mapping content. Time must still be given to developing meaningful philosophy statements, biblical integrative elements, and selection of the key content by the faculty. Maps will not and should not replace faculty lesson plans, but maps could be foundational to the generation of lesson plans.

Essential to any curriculum document is its usability by the faculty and effectiveness as a foundation device to guide instruction and evaluate its learning impact. A well-constructed map can accomplish this task and meet the requirements above, but it will take more preplanning, particularly if a Web-based system is utilized.

**Hospitality Suggestions for Hosting an Accreditation Team**

For schools seeking accreditation, the climactic experience is the team visit. The team arrives on site with the desire to serve the candidate school well and to accomplish a credible job that will accurately reflect the spiritual and academic ministry of the host school. In order to facilitate the work of the team, the host school should enhance the setting as much as possible for the team members. While these matters may appear to be mundane, they are vital to using the team to maximum advantage.
The team should be cared for in a suitable manner. It is not important to spend beyond what is financially reasonable. However, it is crucial for the host school to allocate sufficient funds to accomplish the process of accreditation in a professional and warm manner. Hosting the accreditation team is of key importance in the accreditation process.

Hosting the team includes pre-visit contact, on-site consideration, and post-visit communication. The following is a suggested guide:

1. **Pre-visit contact** – Prior to the visit, the host school can do a great deal to orient the team and establish rapport that will prepare the way for a successful on-site visit.

   A. The host school administrator needs to communicate warmly and professionally with each team member. By establishing an air of openness and accommodation, each team member will feel welcome and appreciated. After all, this is a task that requires a commitment of much time and effort on a volunteer basis.

   B. Each team member needs to be informed of lodging accommodations and travel arrangements. Names, addresses, and phone numbers are important for team members and their families.

   C. The materials to be supplied prior to the visit need to be professionally complete and sent to each team member in ample time. The team members should receive the Self-study no later than four weeks prior to the visit. The Self-study needs to be complete, and all the data that is to be attached should be included. The pages of the Self-study should be numbered consecutively for easy identification and documentation. An attractively prepared Self-study is impressive and provides the first major impression for team members regarding the ministry of the school.

   D. Good communication prior to the visit is significant and really does help make for a successful on-site team experience.

2. **On-site consideration** –

   A. The board, faculty, and staff of the school should be oriented prior to the visit. The host school administrator needs to meet with board, faculty, and staff members and explain carefully their roles during the visit. Apprehension and awkwardness should be diffused. Host school personnel need to feel comfortable with the visit and be able to welcome team members and talk with them openly.

   The chairperson should lay groundwork for the on-site visit during the consultation visits. Appropriate meetings with the board and staff can be very helpful.

   When team members visit classrooms, often there is awkwardness and the teacher feels intimidated. If teachers are given guidelines on how to ease this, then the experience can be much more successful. A comfortable chair placed next to the door so the team member can move in and out of the room easily and without distraction to the students is wise planning.

   B. The host school should orient the visiting team. This is so important, because it can set the tone for the entire visit. A warm and welcome environment is always a help to a visiting team. Here are some suggested ways to provide this orientation:

   1. Arrange for a tour of facilities the day the team arrives

   2. Plan an initial meeting with board and key people on the afternoon or evening when the team first assembles. During this time, a brief history and purpose of the school can be
given. Administrators, board members, students, teachers, and parents can be involved. The team chairperson should present remarks that will explain the role of the team and set the host school family at ease. This can all be done at a meal or dessert setting.

3. Provide an informal get-acquainted time with the faculty. It is probably best that this be done at a separate time when team members and faculty members can converse. A snack breakfast with finger foods on the first day often works well. The team chairperson should address the faculty briefly.

4. Provide personalized name tags for host school faculty. Make sure the print is large enough to be easily read.

C. A private conference meeting room should be available to the team at the school. The effectiveness of the team process correlates with effective work space.

The conference room at the school should be stocked with notepads, staplers, staples, paper clips, sticky notes, pens, pencils, etc. as well as an organized box of “Data to be Supplied”.

Drinks and snacks are much appreciated by the team members and should be made available in the meeting room. This is an inexpensive way to show appreciation for the long hours of work accomplished in these rooms. This is an excellent way for parent volunteers to be involved.

D. In preparing the Self-study, there is data to be supplied when the team arrives. Most of these items should be placed in the conference meeting rooms at the school. Data which needs to remain in the school offices should be made readily available to designated team members and its location designated in the data supplied resources listing. It is not impressive if team members request items and they are either not available or school personnel have to scurry around collecting the required materials.

E. Curriculum guides are included in the data to be supplied during the on-site visit. However, due to the crucial nature of this document, it is mentioned separately for emphasis. Team members require these guides in order to evaluate the academic status of the school. A copy of the curriculum guide must also be submitted to the regional office along with the Self-study.

F. When possible, it is best to provide privacy for each team member when making lodging arrangements. It is often necessary to work late into the night or get up very early to complete the necessary work. This can be accomplished much more efficiently when each team member has a private room. It is also a nice gesture to place a basket of goodies in each guest room.

G. Meals may be arranged at the hotel, host school, or local restaurants. It is by far best to have lunches provided at the school since it is too consuming for the team to leave. It is also a great convenience to the team if a continental breakfast can be provided at the host school. For evening meals, it is helpful to dine out at local restaurants or the hotel. Please make reservations in advance and also make arrangements regarding a payment plan. The time factor is an important element to consider when making reservations.

H. It is essential for team members to be able to easily find classrooms or other locations during the visit. Please help them by providing a map/site plan of the facilities.

I. Class schedules and lesson plans should be made available to team members. This will facilitate classroom observations. The class schedules should be given to team members upon their arrival at the hotel. This will allow them to adequately prepare their classroom visitation schedule. It is
important for teachers to stick to their schedules. Please remind the teachers that tests and videos should not be included in the lesson plans during the team visit.

J. The administrators should provide opportunities for the team members to interview students, parents, board members, pastors, and other key people. This needs to be done in consultation with the chairperson. When a group of students or parents is interviewed, the group should represent a good sampling of individuals. Team members do not want a staged, perfect group. They want a group that will share open and honest input about the school. Each faculty member is to be interviewed by at least one team member.

K. At the conclusion of the visit, it is appropriate to present each team member with a hospitality gift as a way of saying “thank you” for their service. The host school may even want to give a gift that denotes the flavor of the school such as a school cookbook, tie clasp, angel pin, organizer, devotional book, plaque, etc.

3. Post-visit communication – About a week after the on-site visit has been completed, it is very appropriate that the head administrator or another key person communicate a word of thanks to each team member. The expression of appreciation and gratitude is always impressive and will serve as a seal to a successful and rewarding experience.

TRANSPORTATION FOR TEAM MEMBERS

1. The school host is responsible for communicating with all team members about their travel schedules, mode of travel, and arrival times.

2. The school administration should send a welcome letter expressing appreciation for the team members being willing to serve the school. Encourage the team members to let the administration know if they have any special needs which might be met. This letter should request that each team member return the travel information form (to be sent by the chairperson in duplicate – one for chairperson and one for school), at least one week before the visit. As a courtesy to the team members and their families, be sure to include the name, address and telephone number of the hotel and school. (Should there be a mix-up at the airport, the team member will be able to find his/her way to the motel.)

3. Airport pickups: Because the team members have a considerable amount of work to do in preparation for the visit, and some may still need to do work upon arrival or need to meet early with the chairperson or other team members, we respectfully request that team members not be asked to wait at the airport while other flights are being met. If arrival times are an hour or more apart, it would be helpful if faculty members could be assigned to meet the flights individually or when flights are close together and in the same terminal. Flights coming in different terminals will need separate people to pick them up. Often flights are not on time, making it necessary for the host to be in two different terminals at the same time.

ACSI Board Policies

The ACSI Board of Directors has established the following practice regarding reimbursement of travel expenses.

1. All air travel must be approved in advance by the team chairperson and the school administrator. When flying, it is expected that team members will fly at the lowest discount rate using airline-imposed restrictions such as the following:
   a. Booking tickets which must be purchased a certain number of days in advance (currently, 30 days in advance, but this varies with each airline and with the seasons of the year).
b. No changes may be made in the flight schedule.

2. Reimbursement will be paid based on the least expensive rate between the comparison of the lowest airline discount rate, plus parking at the airport and the appropriate mileage rate for driving, plus meals en route.

3. When driving, reimbursement will be at the current per mile rate. If the team member is stopping off for other business en route, the cost of reimbursement will be shared and the school will pay its prorated share.

4. Car rental requires advance authorization by the chairperson and the school.

5. Original receipts are required.

6. Expenses which will not be reimbursed include items not directly related to ACSI business, such as telephone calls, meals for family members and guests, entertainment, etc. Please have the hotel deduct these expenses from the bill and pay for them personally.
Application for Accreditation

In submitting this application, you are asserting that you have carefully read REACH: Accreditation Manual for EE–12 North American and International Schools. The commitments and standards should be studied closely before you apply, since they outline the protocol for accreditation by the Association of Christian Schools International.

Date________________________ School name ________________________________
Phone (   )_____________________ Fax (   )________________________
Mailing address ________________________________
Administrator/Director ________________________________
E-mail ___________________ Year founded _____________ Enrollment _________________
Grades/ages served _______________________________

Accreditation Desired
Early Education: Age levels _________________ through _________________
Elementary: Grade levels from _________________ through _________________
Secondary: Grade levels from _________________ through _________________
Boarding facility: Yes _____ No _____

If Currently Accredited
A. Date accreditation granted: Initially __________Current year __________
B. Grades/ages accredited: Initially __________ Current year __________
C. If jointly accredited, with whom?__________________________ Grades accredited __________
D. Renewal date of accreditation __________ Date of expiration __________
E. Joint accreditation planned Yes _____ (With whom?) _________________ No _____
F. ACSI accreditation protocol to be used REACH _______ ASP _________

For the school to be granted candidacy status by the ACSI regional office—or for international schools, the ACSI Office of International Ministries—this completed application must be accompanied by the following:
1. A check (in U.S. funds) payable to ACSI for the applicable amount: $600 K–12, $800 EE–12, $350 EE Stand-alone program
2. A copy of the resolution appearing in the school board minutes that approves of the school’s seeking accreditation with the Association of Christian Schools International
3. A completed copy of the ACSI Pre-accreditation Standards/Rubrics Checklist
4. If this is a joint accreditation, a copy of any correspondence relating to accreditation with the other accrediting agency or agencies with which you are seeking accreditation (This gives ACSI documentation to use in order to enter into discussion with the other agency or agencies involved.)
5. The completed indemnification agreement, in appendix E (The indemnification agreement provided is a sample that you can use, or you are free to develop your own agreement with the assistance of your own legal counsel.)

6. If the early education program is exempt from state licensure, or if the early education classrooms that are a part of your school are license exempt, the completed exemption form, in appendix D

Please return this form and the attachments to the appropriate ACSI regional office, or for international schools, to the ACSI Office of International Ministries. Once these items have been received, you will be contacted to schedule an on-site visit to confirm your school’s candidacy status.
ASSOCIATION OF CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS
CANDIDACY STATUS ANNUAL REPORT

SCHOOL

______________________________

ACSI REGIONAL OFFICE

______________________________

DATE

CANDIDATE STATUS ACCREDITATION ANNUAL REPORT

Year: __________________________

School: __________________________

Address: __________________________

City: __________________________ State: _______ Zip: _______ Phone: __________________________

Fax: __________________________ Email: __________________________

Administrator: __________________________ Years at school: __________________________

ACSI Regional Commissioner assigned to school: __________________________

I. Accreditation Information:

Date candidacy granted (month/year):______________ Grades to be accredited:______________

Projected date of visit (month/year):______________

If joint accreditation, with whom? ____________ Grades to be accredited:______________

II. Please complete the following information for the grades that will be accredited:

Student enrollment: (as of September 15)

Last year: ____________ Current year: ____________

Faculty Information

Full-time Faculty:

Last year: ____________ Current year: ____________

Total part-time faculty (current year): ____________ New faculty (current year): ____________

Of new faculty members, how many replaced former faculty members? ____________

Of new faculty members, how many are new additional faculty members? ____________

Do all full-time and part-time faculty have a minimum of an earned Bachelor's degree? ____________

If no, an exception to this standard must be requested from the Regional Accreditation Commission. Please use the REQUEST FOR WAIVER FOR NON-DEGREE TEACHER.
Number of teacher exceptions your school has already been granted by the Accreditation Commission:

School Board Information

Total number of board members:
Last year: _____________  Current year: _____________

Total number of new board members this year: _____________

Of new board members, how many replaced former board members? _____________

Of new board members, how many are new additional board members? _____________

Is the school's board policy manual substantively current and up-to-date? _____________

Comment on progress being made on completing the board policy manual.

III. Curriculum Guides/Scope and Sequence

Are the written curriculum guides/scope and sequence substantively current and up-to-date? ______

Comment on progress being made on completing curriculum guides and scope and sequence.


Did your school have a financial audit/review OR complete the Statement of Financial Practices? ______

ACSI requires the completion of the Annual Statement of Financial Practices or an annual review or audit completed by a person who is not a member of the school or church board, or spouse of an employee of the school or church. An annual review or audit must be completed for the year of accreditation or renewal of accreditation.
V. ACSI Certification and Administrator/Faculty Degrees

Complete the ACSI Certification Report. Please note that this report should include all administrators and teachers, their degrees, and status of ACSI certification.

A. All full and part-time faculty must have an earned bachelor's degree.
B. 80% of full-time faculty must hold a valid ACSI teaching certificate (Interim level or higher)
C. 100% of all administrators must hold a valid ACSI administrative certificate (Interim level or higher)

VI. School Improvement Plan/Strategic Plan

Is the School Improvement Plan/Strategic Plan substantively current and being revised as need?

Comment on progress being made on the school's improvement plan/strategic plan.

VII. Comments Regarding Changes/Schedule of Visit

Indicate any major changes in the school which may affect accreditation status and/or proposed schedule.

IX. Completion of Sub-Committee Reports

Indicate what sub-committee reports have been completed to date.

X. Additional Requirements

The school has completed Accreditation training.  

Target date for completion of self-study: 

Target date for ACSI accreditation visit:  

XI. Required Signatures/Dates
Please note that both the signatures of the Chief School Administrator and the School Board Chairperson are mandatory. This page must be printed out and returned with the school's annual accreditation fee.

Chief School Administrator: _______________________________
Date: __________________

School Board Chairperson: _______________________________
Date: __________________

NOTE: Please print out a copy of this report for your records as well as save a copy on your computer. Email this report as an attachment to the Regional Office. A $200.00 late fee will be assessed if sent on or after the specified date.

Reports should only be submitted by email to the Regional Director. Signature pages and the school's annual accreditation fee should be mailed to the Regional Office.

Questions about this report should be directed to the Regional Director.
ASSOCIATION OF CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS
ACCREDITATION ANNUAL REPORT

SCHOOL

______________________________________________________________

ACSI REGIONAL OFFICE

______________________________________________________________

DATE

______________________________________________________________
Annual Report Form

DUE IN THE REGIONAL OFFICE: ________________

School:______________________________________________________________________________

Address:______________________________________________________________________________

City: ___________________________________________ State: ________   Zip: _____________

Telephone: (____)_____________   Fax: (____)  _______________  Email:_______________________

Administrator:____________________________      Number of years at school:________________________

Contact Person (if other than administrator): ________________________ email:________________________

ACCREDITATION SCHEDULE (Give month and year)

A.   Date Accreditation Granted: Initially _____________        Current Year _____________

B.   Grades Accredited: Initially _____________        Current Year _____________

C.   If Joint Accreditation with Whom: ________________________ Grades Accredited: _____________

D.   Renewal Date of Accreditation: _____________    Date of Expiration _____________

E.   Joint Accreditation Planned:  ___ Yes (with whom?) ___________________       ____No

CURRENT SCHOOL INFORMATION

PLEASE COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING FOR THIS SCHOOL YEAR (If your school is K-12 and only the elementary or secondary school is accredited, the information given should be only for the accredited grades in your school.)

1. STUDENTS  Student enrollment figures for each accredited unit:

   Early Education:         Last Year ______       Current Year ______
   Elementary:              Last Year ______       Current Year ______
   Middle School:           Last Year ______       Current Year ______
   High School:             Last Year ______       Current Year ______

2. SCHOOL BOARD
   Total number of board members: ______   New school board members this year: ______

3. ADMINISTRATION
   Are there any new administrators this year? ___ No   ___ Yes

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<th>Admin. Name</th>
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<th>ACSI Certification</th>
<th>Current Position</th>
<th>Years Admin.</th>
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Administrator’s Accreditation Overview (3-9-10)
4. FACULTY/STAFFING INFORMATION

A. FACULTY/STAFFING:
   Total number of full-time faculty ________
   Total number of part-time faculty ________
   Total number of new faculty members this year: ________

   Early Education: Provide information concerning changes in staffing on a separate form

B. PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS:
   Do all full- and part-time K-12 faculty hold a four-year college degree?  Yes ___  No ___
   Do all K-12 administrators hold four-year college degrees?  Yes ___  No ___

   If NO is selected, attach a list of any non-degreed staff, current educational status, and action plans for compliance with the standard regarding degreed teachers.

C. FACULTY CERTIFICATION:

   An accredited school is required to maintain the teacher certification standard over the term of their accreditation. Show how the K-12 portion of the school continues to meet ACSI certification requirements of 80% at the Temporary or above level.

   • ACSI Certified (above Temporary level)  Number _____  % ______
   • Holding Temporary Certificates  Number _____  % ______
   • Not ACSI Certified  Number _____  % ______

   Does the school continue to meet the minimum requirement for ACSI Teacher/Administrator Certification? Yes __________________ No __________________

   **IF YOUR SCHOOL IS NOT MEETING THE REQUIREMENTS, PLEASE ATTACH AN EXPLANATION**

5. FINANCES

   An annual report of the school’s financial soundness is a requirement for maintaining your accreditation. It cannot be waived or exempted and a statement of “intent” does not meet this requirement. The financial report is for the prior fiscal year (i.e. your annual Report for the 2007-2008 school year should have the financial report for 2006-2007). Please attach the statement of financial practices to this report.

   a. Did your school have an audit or financial review for the previous year? Yes _____  No _____

   b. Are all salaries and bills paid on time? Yes ______  No ______ (provide a separate explanation if needed)

6. CONTINUOUS SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

   a. Is the school in compliance with all accreditation standards & commitments?  ____ Yes  ____ No (if no, attach an explanation and the standard(s) or commitment(s) not in compliance)

   b. Attach a progress report that addresses the **MAJOR** recommendations from the last accreditation visit.

   c. How has your annual school improvement plan been updated based on data gathered from school wide assessment?

7. EXEMPTION FORM: If your Early Education Department is not state licensed please fill out form that can be downloaded from the ACSI website.
8. REPORT VERIFICATION
School Chief Administrator _________________________ / _________________________
(print) (signature)

Board Chairperson _____________________________ / _____________________________
(print) (signature)

Date completed __________________________ Date Received in Regional Office ______________

9. DUAL OR THIRD PARTY ACCREDITATION AGREEMENTS
Please note, if a school is accredited with another organization as well, additional reports may be required.

Please send the complete report (no partial reports please) to your ACSI Regional Office. A copy of this report should be kept in your files. A $200.00 late fee will be assessed if you do not submit your annual report on time.
CERTIFICATION REPORT

As of __/__/__ (date)

For _____________________________ (school)

Directions: All faculty must have an earned bachelor’s degree. (At least 80 percent of full-time teaching staff and FTEs (full-time equivalents) must have an ACSI certification.)

1. List all administrators and full-time, part-time, and nondegree teachers.
2. Mail original and keep a copy.

ADMINISTRATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Administrator</th>
<th>Bachelor’s</th>
<th>Degree Major</th>
<th>Teaching Area</th>
<th>Type of ACSI Certification</th>
<th>Issue Date</th>
<th>Expiration Date</th>
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Summary

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number and Percent of Administrators with a Degree (BA or BS)</th>
<th>Number and Percent of Administrators with an ACSI Certificate</th>
<th>Number and Percent of Administrators with No ACSI Certificate</th>
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<tr>
<td>Administration</td>
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Certification Forms

(Electronic versions are on the accreditation CD and can be completed on your computer)
## FULL-TIME FACULTY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty Member</th>
<th>Bachelor's</th>
<th>Degree Major</th>
<th>Teaching Area</th>
<th>Type of ACSI Certification</th>
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### Summary

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<th></th>
<th>Number and Percent of Faculty with a Degree (BA or BS)</th>
<th>Number and Percent of Faculty with an ACSI Certificate</th>
<th>Number and Percent of Faculty with No ACSI Certificate</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full-Time Faculty</td>
<td>#</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>#</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Please enter the number of hours that qualifies as a full-time position at your school. ________
### CERTIFICATION REPORT

**FULL-TIME FACULTY (continued)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty Member</th>
<th>Bachelor's</th>
<th>Degree Major</th>
<th>Teaching Area</th>
<th>Type of ACSI Certification</th>
<th>Issue Date</th>
<th>Expiration Date</th>
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### Summary

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<th>Summary</th>
<th>Number and Percent of Faculty with a Degree (BA or BS)</th>
<th>Number and Percent of Faculty with an ACSI Certificate</th>
<th>Number and Percent of Faculty with No ACSI Certificate</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full-Time Faculty</td>
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</table>

Please enter the number of hours that qualifies as a full-time position at your school. _________
PART-TIME FACULTY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty Member</th>
<th>Bachelor's</th>
<th>Degree Major</th>
<th>Teaching Area</th>
<th>Type of ACSI Certification</th>
<th>Issue Date</th>
<th>Expiration Date</th>
<th>Hours Taught Weekly</th>
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**Summary**

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<th>Number and Percent of Part-Time Faculty with No ACSI Certificate</th>
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Please enter the number of hours that qualifies as a part-time position at your school. ________
# Certification Report

## Nondegree Faculty

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty Member</th>
<th>Teaching Area</th>
<th>Number of Years of Experience in Christian Schooling</th>
<th>Number of Years of Experience at this School</th>
<th>Number of Hours Taught Weekly</th>
<th>Exception Request Submitted</th>
<th>Professional Development Plan (PDP) Submitted</th>
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## Summary

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</table>
REQUEST FOR WAIVER FOR NON-DEGREEED TEACHER

ACSI Accreditation Standard 4 requires that all school administrators and teachers must hold at least a bachelor’s degree from a college that is an accredited or recognized institution. Explanation of exceptions that are acceptable are attached.

This form is used to request a waiver of this requirement for individual teachers with unique circumstances. Teachers granted waivers must be included in the school’s certification report and counted in the 20% non-certificated allowance.

The ACSI accredited school must complete a separate form for each non-degreed teacher, full- or part-time for which the school requests a waiver. The completed request for waiver must be sent with a copy of the school’s completed certification report to the ACSI Regional Office.

**SCHOOL INFORMATION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Name</th>
<th>Date of Application</th>
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<tr>
<th>School Address</th>
<th>School City</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Zip</th>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Administrator</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>Email</th>
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**EMPLOYEE INFORMATION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title (Mr. Mrs. Miss Dr.)</th>
<th>First Name</th>
<th>M.I</th>
<th>Last Name</th>
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Teaching Status: Full Time  Part Time  How many teaching hours per week?

Current Teaching Assignment (Check all that apply.)

- Elementary (grades K-6)
- Classroom Teacher  Which grade level(s)?
- Specialist  What is the area of specialty (e.g., music, PE, art)?
- Secondary (grades 7-12)  Which subject area(s)?

In what year did the school first hire this employee to be a teacher?

Has the employee’s teaching position changed since he/she was first employed? (Circle) YES NO

If yes, please explain the changes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action Taken:</th>
<th>Justification:</th>
<th>Date Reviewed:</th>
<th>Reviewed By:</th>
<th>Notification Sent:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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CONDITIONS OF NON-DEGREE WAIVER

In order for the waiver to be approved, **ONE** of the following plans must be in place. If a teacher is not working on completing a degree, the school must prepare a *Professional Growth Plan* for this teacher.

It is expected that the waivered teacher will complete the requirements for the **ACSI Philosophy of Christian Education Course** and the **ACSI Bible CEU Requirements** (one per year).

Has this employee completed the ACSI Philosophy Course? (Circle) YES NO  
Date completed:__________________  If no, when will this be completed?__________________

Has this employee completed at least one Bible CEU this year? (Circle) YES NO  
If yes, name of course:__________________  If no, when will this be completed?__________________

*Please check and complete the appropriate section below.*

- **PLAN ONE: Degree Completion Plan**
  - Number of college credits completed to date?  _______________
  - Number of college credits needed to complete a Bachelor’s Degree?  _______ Major:  ________________
  - Through which college or university will the coursework be taken?  ________________
  - What is the projected date for receiving the bachelor’s degree?  ________________

- **PLAN TWO: Professional Growth Plan**
  - Number of college units completed to date?  ______________
  - What are the circumstances that have prevented this teacher from completing a B.A. degree?  
    ________________
  - Describe the *Professional Growth Plan* being followed to ensure this teacher’s success in fulfilling his/her teaching assignment (courses/workshops, conventions/conferences, supervision and evaluation, etc.). A copy of this plan may be attached.  
    ________________

*Please attach the teacher’s weekly schedule, indicating all subjects and grade levels taught.*

I acknowledge by signing below that the information provide above and attached is an accurate representation of my teaching responsibilities. I also commit to completing the Plan that has been outlined above as a condition of employment at the school.

__________________________________________  ___________________________  
Teacher  Date  Administrator  Date
Standard 4 – Personnel

Training – Degreed and Non-Degreed Faculty (note this is currently under Board Commission review and is subject to change)

The ACSI Manual gives as the basis for an exception to this standard “a part time teacher not teaching in a core subject”. The Manual further notes that such an exception must be requested in writing from the Regional Accreditation Commission. Core subjects include the language arts such as reading, English, literature, grammar and composition, as well as mathematics, science, social studies, and Bible. Bible may be a special case granted by the Regional Commission.

All exceptions still must follow a professional growth development plan. The Christian Philosophy of Education and biblical studies also must be completed.

Any other exceptions to standard 4 must follow the guidelines presented below:

1. Emergency situation for an accredited school
   a. A one school year (only) exception may be granted to an accredited school that, in an emergency situation, fills a position with a non-degreed staff member.
   b. The completion of a school year by a non-degreed staff member is considered “one school year”.
   c. The Regional Office must be notified, in writing, at the time of the emergency hire.
   d. The Regional Commission will not place the school, during the one year exception, on advised, warned, or probationary status.
   e. Should for any reason, the school extend the emergency hire into a second school year the school will be placed on advised status and if necessary followed with warned and probationary status.

2. Long-term faculty member in a school
   a. The Regional Commission may grant an ongoing exception to a teacher who has 10 or more years of teaching in the same school.
   b. A maximum of two teachers in the school may be granted this exception but it must not exceed the certification requirement of 80%.
   c. The school must request the exception following the Exception Process guidelines see request for non-degreed waiver form).
   d. The school shall have current policy and practice in place for not hiring non-degreed teaching staff.
   e. An applicant for accreditation may be granted candidate status when the Commission has approved the exception.
   f. An accredited school is not placed on advised, warned, or probation for an approved long-term staff exception unless it violates the 80% certification requirement.

3. Applicant for candidacy with non-degreed faculty
   a. Schools that apply for candidacy and have non-degreed teachers who do not qualify under the guidelines above for an exception and have it granted by the Regional Commission, must meet the standard before having a visiting committee for accreditation.
b. A Regional Commission may decide to withhold candidacy from a school until a plan for addressing the deficiency is approved by them.

4. **Accredited schools with non-degreed faculty**
   a. The school must adopt a policy and practice of not hiring non-degreed teaching staff for the future.
   b. Each school must submit to the Regional Commission a deficiency plan for each non-degreed faculty member, which includes the requirement of obtaining an appropriate teaching degree within two years. Progress on the plan must be reported to the Regional Commission with each annual report.
   c. A school with non-degreed teachers, who have not been granted an exception in a category above, must have its accreditation status identified as advised.
   d. Schools with non-degreed teachers who fail to follow their approved degree completion plan are to be placed on warned status.
   e. Accredited schools must remain in compliance with standard.
Annual Professional Development Plan Report

Directions: To be completed for every non-degreed teacher who has been approved for an exception by the Regional Accreditation Commission. This report is to be filed annually with Accreditation Report.

Teacher name: ___________________________ School year: ___________________________

School: ___________________________ City: ___________________________

Teaching Status: [ ] Full Time [ ] Part Time

Current Teaching Assignment: ___________________________

Deficiency requiring Professional Development Plan:

Date of required completion of requirements (if any): ___________________________

Check educational competencies addressed during this past school year (check all that apply):

[ ] Classroom Management [ ] Curriculum development
[ ] Methods of instruction [ ] Philosophy of Christian Ed.
[ ] Professional practices [ ] Interpersonal relationships
[ ] Content mastery [ ] Child development
[ ] Biblical integration [ ] Pedagogy
[ ] Student Assessment [ ] Teaching of reading
[ ] Computer literacy [ ] In-field college courses
[ ] Conflict management [ ] Exceptional child in classroom

Rationale for action plan developed by school:

Educational activities completed during this past school year:

Competency: ___________________________
Training: Seminar □ In-Service □
College □ Conference □

Name and explanation of training:

Competency:

Training Seminar □ In-Service □
College □ Conference □

Name and explanation of training:

Competency:

Training Seminar □ In-Service □
College □ Conference □

Name and explanation of training:

Competency:

Training Seminar □ In-Service □
College □ Conference □

Name and explanation of training:
Competency:

Training: Seminar ☐ In-Service ☐
College ☐ Conference ☐

Name and explanation of training:

Competency:

Training: Seminar ☐ In-Service ☐
College ☐ Conference ☐

Name and explanation of training:

Competency:

Training: Seminar ☐ In-Service ☐
College ☐ Conference ☐

Name and explanation of training:

Competency:

Training: Seminar ☐ In-Service ☐
College ☐ Conference ☐

Name and explanation of training:
Name and explanation of training:

Competency:

Training: Seminar ☐ In-Service ☐
College ☐ Conference ☐

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Training: Seminar ☐ In-Service ☐
College ☐ Conference ☐

Name and explanation of training:
BOARD ACCREDITATION POLICY - NON-NEGOTIABLE INDICATORS

There are indicators that reflect the policies established by the ACSI Executive Board. These indicators are not standards but have the weight of importance in that they must be clearly addressed prior to an initial or renewal visit. They also require that schools affirm compliance in their annual report.

NON-NEGOTIABLE INDICATORS:

All of the commitments and standards in the REACH manual should be met at an acceptable level for a school to be identified as “accredited”. In support of this “acceptable level” the following indicators are highlighted as critical to meeting the commitments and standards for ACSI accreditation.

1.0 PHILOSOPHY AND FOUNDATIONS

1.1 The philosophy, vision, mission, and core values statements of the school/program are established and are reviewed regularly and systematically in a collaborative manner.

1.3 The school/program has a clear written statement of faith that identifies the beliefs to which the school/program adheres and that is consistent with the written statement of philosophy.

2.0 GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE LEADERSHIP

2.1 Policies are in place to see that the educational needs—as well as the developmental needs of the whole child—of each admitted student/child are being met on the basis of biblical principles, professional ethics, and high standards. Staff members are sensitive to the culture, gender, language, and special needs of students/children and their families.

2.2 Established written policies and procedures promote effective operations in admissions, governance, finance, and other operational aspects. Appropriate legal documents and clearly articulated articles of incorporation, governing body policies, and bylaws are established and are available for review.

2.4 The governance and leadership of the school/program reflect a clear Christ-centered governance and leadership model. According to their role, the governance and leadership provide spiritual leadership to the staff, students/children, and other stakeholders in fulfilling the Christ-centered mission of the school/program.

2.5 Financial resources are available to fulfill the mission and programs, and financial operations and decisions are conducted with integrity and in accordance with biblical principles. Income received from tuition is appropriately used for education-related expenses within the school/program.

3.0 HOME & COMMUNITY RELATIONS & STUDENT SERVICES

3.2 Enrollment must be sufficient to establish the viability of the school/program.

3.6 The nondiscrimination statement must be demonstrated in the actions, relationships, and programs of the school/program.

3.7 The guidance services include the following minimum services: (1) for early education children and families—assessment, screenings, referrals to community services, resources, and referrals to support the success of the children and families; (2) for elementary and middle school/junior high school students—standardized and/or criterion-referenced testing, counseling, and referrals; (3) for high school students—assessment, counseling, referrals, and post–high school planning.
4.0 SCHOOL PERSONNEL

4.1 Each staff member must be a Christian, and each must have a clear testimony of faith in Christ, reflecting the school’s/program’s code of ethics/lifestyle statement that is affirmed by the administrative team upon hiring.

4.2 The leadership of the school/program ensures that staff members know and understand the ethical considerations of their respective positions. Considerations include, but are not limited to, the following: • Confidentiality • Professionalism • Appropriate relationships with staff, parents, and children • Personal and spiritual development • Professional reading and contributions to the field • Flexibility • A Christlike attitude

4.5 The K–12 chief administrator and all K–12 principals must hold an ACSI administrative certificate.

4.5a The director of the early education program has professional training as evidenced by having obtained, at minimum, a bachelor’s degree in early childhood education/child development (or its equivalent) from an accredited institution.

The director also has a working understanding of business practices as evidenced by nine credit hours of college course work in administration/business (or its equivalent). The course work includes training in leadership development and supervision of adults.

4.6 All K–12 teachers must hold, at minimum, a bachelor’s degree from an accredited college/university or an institution recognized by ACSI.

4.6a EE Teachers: Early education teachers must have obtained, at minimum, an associate’s degree in early childhood education/child development from an accredited institution.

4.6b EE Assistant Teachers: Early education assistant teachers must have obtained, at minimum, a state/nationally recognized competency credential.

4.7 The K–12 faculty, including full-time equivalents (FTEs), must hold current ACSI certification. (80%)}

4.10 Procedures, instruments, and files for annual, effective, performance-based evaluation, hiring, rehiring, and separation of employment for all personnel must be organized and systematically stored. A performance assessment includes a self-evaluation component and informs a personal professional development plan of each staff member.

4.12 All personnel, including volunteers and substitutes, must have on file the appropriate screening and background checks, and all personnel must be supervised by qualified staff. Orientation for new staff members is thorough and is conducted before new staff work with the students.

5.0 INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM

5.1 The curriculum guide/plan is based on biblical truth, sound educational practice, and appropriate state or national standards that inform the instructional program for each age and grade level and each program.

5.2 The curriculum guide/plan includes the following components: (1) schoolwide expected student outcomes, (2) an educational philosophy that includes a biblical basis for each course, and (3) mapping or scope and sequence of instruction for each subject area at each grade level (incorporating items such as time frame for each instructional unit, overall instructional goals for each course, instructional resources and textbooks, specific instructional objectives for each unit of study, instructional methods, and evaluation and assessment strategies).
5.7 There is a systematic program in place for the assessment of student learning and development.

7.0 CRISIS PLANNING, SAFETY, HEALTH, & FOOD/NUTRITION SERVICES
7.1 A written security and crisis management plan has been developed and implemented, and it provides appropriate training for all staff and students.

7.3 The school/program complies with applicable local, state, and federal laws regarding safety and health issues.

7.6 The school/program complies with its legal reporting responsibilities in cases of alleged child abuse, neglect, or other areas in which reporting is mandated.

8.0 FACILITIES, ENVIRONMENT, & TRANSPORTATION
8.1 Required local, state, provincial, and federal legal standards for fire protection, sanitation, and transportation are met when applicable.

8.3 The facilities are suitable for the size of the school/program; they are well maintained, enhancing quality instruction for the students/children.

8.7 Written transportation rules and regulations as well as adequate training for students are provided.

9.0 CHARACTER, VALUES, & SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENTS/CHILDREN
9.1 Expected student outcomes include character development, acquisition of Christian values, and spiritual formation.

9.5 Ethical and moral behaviors based on biblical character and values are routinely taught and modeled by the staff, learned and displayed by the students, and implemented throughout the organization.

10.0 CONTINUOUS SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT
10.1 The ongoing planning process is broad based, collaborative, and committed to serving all stakeholders.

10.2 The improvement plan has its foundation in student achievement and development, school improvement/effectiveness, and the schoolwide expected student outcomes.
## APPLICATION & FEES FOR CANDIDACY AND ACCREDITATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Early Education Stand Alone Program</th>
<th>EE through 12</th>
<th>K through 12</th>
<th>International</th>
<th>Boarding Schools</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Application Fees</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>(new applications only; renewal applications have no associated fee)</td>
<td>$350</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>600</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Annual Fees</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>(applicable once accreditation has been granted; not applicable during candidacy phase)</td>
<td>$100</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>200</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>School Visit Fees</strong></td>
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<td>The school/program under consideration is responsible to pay for the expenses of the visiting team (travel, food, and lodging).</td>
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**Note:** The candidacy period covers three years for the application fee. Additional year(s), if needed, requires an additional $200 fee / per year.
Sample of a page from the school self assessment

Sample Christian Academy
Section One – Philosophy and Foundations

Standard one
The school has an articulate, well-defined, regularly and systematically reviewed written philosophy, mission, vision, statement of faith, beliefs and core values statements. These statements outline the school’s Christian distinctive and communicates a clear purpose and direction for school effectiveness and student growth demonstrating a commitment to the development of the whole child.

INDICATORS:
1.1 Establishes and reviews regularly & systematically the vision, mission, and core values statements for the school in a collaborative manner. (C)
1.2 Communicates the philosophy, mission, vision, and purpose to its constituents and school community. (C)
1.3 Has a clear written statement of faith that identifies the beliefs to which the school adheres and is consistent with the school’s written statement of philosophy. (C)
1.4 The philosophy statement consistently applies as an integrative, coordinating, and examining device throughout all aspects of the school’s programs, operations, and curriculum. (C)
1.5 The individuals who comprise the organization continually identify plans/goals to advance the mission, vision, and philosophy of the school. (C)
1.6 Demonstrates its commitment to the development of the whole child (Luke 2:52) – spiritually, intellectually, physically, emotionally, socially from a distinctly Christian perspective. (C)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator #</th>
<th>Non-compliance</th>
<th>Partial compliance</th>
<th>Compliance</th>
<th>Exceeds compliance</th>
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<td>1.5</td>
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<td>1.6</td>
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<td>X</td>
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</table>

BRIEF NARRATIVE: Give a 2 to 3 paragraph explanation of how you are meeting the standard or what is hindering you from meeting it and your plans for attainment (Use your indicator ratings, documentation, and other sources to validate your explanation).

Sample Christian School faculty and board have, over its fifteen year history, worked hard to both build and consistently apply the school’s core mission and vision elements. When the school was reorganized as an independent school ten years ago, the mission statement was revisited and overhauled by the governing board and sponsoring families of the school into its current form. That document is on display in all classrooms and the school office as well as all public areas of the school so that all who are on the campus will see and know these foundational statements.

The mission of Sample Christian Academy is,

“Sample Christian Academy exists to nurture young men and women in the orthodox foundations and traditions of the Christian faith while creating a classical educational matrix of learning experiences that will enlarge their ability to mature and grow into the full stature of a Godly man or woman, able to effectively...
engage their world and defend their faith to bring God’s wisdom and love to those in need of mercy, compassion, and understanding.”

The school exceeds accreditation standards 1.2 and 1.3 in regularly and formally communicating both the mission and school’s faith foundations to all the stakeholders of the school and insuring that all those in the school know and support those key concepts.

Attention has been given in the past five years to generate core statements about the school’s philosophies for the child, learning, the family, and the schools expected outcomes as evidenced in the lives of those students inculcated in the school’s programs. These key statements are used in both faculty and parent orientations at the beginning of each school year and worked into the instructional program as foundational instructional elements to guide the curriculum and instruction.

While the school’s mission is revisited on an annual basis, ongoing attention will need to be given, per indicator 1.1, to the formalization of review and the establishment of a more clearly defined system of expectations for the outcomes of those reviews as well as indentifying the key school constituents who should and will have a voice and input into those core values. A clearer guiding document will also protect against frivolous tinkering with the philosophic foundations of the school and protect the school’s mission from drifting away from its Christian roots as intended and documented by the school’s founders.

It has been understood from this review process that while the foundations are firm and well established, the support that will keep them solid over time is not fully developed and in need of time, attention, and consistent application.

**DATA/DOCUMENTATION:** Provide needed evidence and documentation to verify meeting the standard (i.e. copy of your vision, mission, core values, & philosophy statements; samples of methods of communication to constituents; statement of faith; plans & goals for advancing statements, etc.).

The following samples are attached for review:
- a. school vision and mission statements
- b. school philosophy document packet
- c. school statement of faith
- d. informational documents for parents and students interested in the school
- e. informational document packet for potential school donors
- f. sample letters from alumni discussing the school’s impact upon their personal faith

The following documentation will be available on-site for the team’s review:
- a. school newsletters and monthly parent news
- b. curriculum expected student outcomes listing by grade and subject
- c. parent and student handbooks
- d. guiding policies for board review of the mission
- e. school history and development monograph

**STRENGTHS:** (State one to three strengths that exemplify your school is meeting this standard)

1. Broad application of the mission statement in both school documents and in any public relations documents generated for use outside the school, expanding the general public’s awareness of and familiarity with the school’s purpose and impact in the city.

2. The review annually by the school administration and faculty of ways and opportunities to express and apply the school’s Christian mission elements and core values in classroom instruction, the school environment, and overall curricular program.
AREAS FOR CONTINUOUS SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT: (State one to three areas for continuous school improvement that will assist your school in ongoing growth)

1. The development of clearer guiding documents for the systematic review, refreshing and/or revision of the school’s philosophy documents with a goal to regularly revisit those documents for ongoing accuracy and application while ensuring their adherence to the foundation Christian mission of the school.

2. Creating a venue that will provide for broader stakeholder input into the review of the school’s mission and vision, to enlarge the input opportunities from the school constituency, both present and past, and provide a more collective voice to the management and application of the school’s key core documents and values.

3. Generation of more comprehensive board policies for the application of the school’s core values and mission into a larger number of documents and public displays to deepen the overall awareness of the school’s unique and distinctive mission.

4. Develop a “coffee cup” version of the school’s mission to better communicate the singular core distinctive of the school while “branding” that distinctive in the minds and memory of all those who are in or come into contact with the school and its constituency.
## School Improvement Plan Suggestions & Samples

**Sample 1**

**School Improvement #1:** The board is currently only trained in the founding philosophy documents on an ad hoc basis without any scheduled process in place.

**Goal:** To insure board familiarity with the school’s key philosophical principles over time.

**Total Time:** 5 years  
**Date Begun:** ______________  
**Date Finished:** ______________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actions</th>
<th>Who is Responsible?</th>
<th>Resources Needed</th>
<th>Time-Line</th>
<th>Action Completion Monitoring</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Gather samples of approaches used by other, similar, accredited schools</td>
<td>Board Chairman</td>
<td>- List of key accredited schools from ACSI</td>
<td>6 months</td>
<td>A sample questionnaire will be generated and sent out.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Review the approaches used by others and generate an applicable approach for use at CCCS</td>
<td>Board members and school CEO</td>
<td>- Time scheduled in the board schedule</td>
<td>6 months</td>
<td>A recommendation will be made by the board for a model (or the development of a model)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Implement the pilot approach / schedule for several cycles of new board members</td>
<td>Board Chairman</td>
<td>- Special scheduled board training sessions - training resources for board members</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>Personal discussion with board members 1 year after coming on the board to assess familiarity with philosophical documents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Revise the process and solidify the protocol in the board policies</td>
<td>School CEO</td>
<td>- Dedicated day for revision of the process - Secretarial time for updating the process &amp; inclusion in the board policy manual</td>
<td>1 year</td>
<td>Updated board manual that reflects training component and schedule.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 5. Implement the new process | Board Chairman  
School CEO  
Board members | - new policy document - training protocol | 3 months | Training time during summer board retreat |
| 6. Poll the board members on the training process – awareness of school mission and philosophy | Board Chairman | - evaluation rubric | 1 month | Completion of training evaluation  
Review of the training time during the board retreat |
| 7. Evaluate the effectiveness of the training | Board Chairman  
School CEO | - Completed evaluations | 1 month | Adjust training program to reflect data gathered from the board evaluations |
Sample 2

**School Improvement Goal #2:** Creation of a student mentoring program that connects high school students with key faculty in a relationally based, supportive environment while providing strong biblical accountability and life-choices goals.

**Outcome:** A program that connects all students with a mentor teacher

**Student Benefit:** Connection with a staff adult that knows their needs and is available for input, encouragement, and guidance.

**Project duration:** 6 Years  
**Begin Date:** June 2002  
**Completion Date:** June 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Person(s) Responsible</th>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Resources Needed</th>
<th>Staff Development</th>
<th>Completion Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Year 1   | - Superintendent - Mentoring committee | - Poll the students for identified needs and issues facing HS students today  
- Discussion with developmental professionals on approaches to mentoring | - Survey for students  
- Funding for survey assessment | none | Data on student issues  
Input from the professional community |
| Year 2   | - Mentoring committee | - Research programs and/or schools with mentoring programs in place. | - Travel funds for visiting programs and/or schools | none | Synthesized report on current program application |
| Year 3   | - Mentoring Committee | - Create a proposal for a mentoring program  
- Flex time for mentoring team meeting | | none | Draft proposal |
| Year 4   | - Board / admin | - Review the proposal by the board and administrative team | | | Edited version of proposal |
| Year 5   | - Admin and Mentoring committee | - Recommendation for implementation of the proposed program  
- Final copy of proposal  
- In-service day for presentation | Orientation on mentoring programs and goals | | Finalized program guide |
| Year 6   | - Mentoring committee | - Generate a student mentoring handbook  
- Generate a mentor's handbook  
- Generate a mentoring schedule | - stipend for summer work | | Handbooks |