



ASSOCIATION of  
CLASSICAL  CHRISTIAN  
SCHOOLS

# ACCREDITATION HANDBOOK

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# THE ACCS ACCREDITATION PROGRAM

## INTRODUCTION

ACCS accreditation is the touchstone for classical Christian excellence and the program of choice for schools committed to the Paideia of the Lord as it was formed through the medieval liberal arts (c. 5th to the 19th century). This vision reflects the original renewal of the 1990's and remains the only classical form instrumental in Christendom and the West. The ACCS remains committed to "Take every thought captive in obedience to Christ" and the truth that there is no domain outside of His authority. This necessitates that, in some cases, we have the courage to teach in ways that are unpopular in the wider culture.

Refined and respected for over thirty years, the ACCS approach to school improvement has helped school leaders, teachers and boards achieve stability and excellence as they help parents raise their Children in the Paideia of the Lord. The Good Soil report, based on ACCS graduates, demonstrates success in our effort.

## MISSION

For classical, Christian schools desiring to raise children in the paideia of the Lord, ACCS accreditation is a collaborative, school-improvement program that encourages mission-alignment, stability, and principled excellence."

## PURPOSE

Successful ACCS schools apply the principles of classical Christian education to every dimension of school life, from the boardroom to the classroom to the school community. ACCS accreditation is founded on three pillars:

**Schools of Excellence.** Parents know that ACCS accreditation reflects enduring excellence. Our legacy as classical Christian schools sets us apart, without the need to chase trends. Our honest framework of clear, proven standards equips schools to make significant progress toward the kind of education they would want for their own children. Beyond the early years of our founding, our standards have grown to be suitable for any form of classical Christian practice in the historic medieval liberal arts tradition.

**School Improvement.** ACCS walks alongside schools from their founding to full maturity, making the journey together in fellowship with likeminded and passionate Christian brothers and sisters. We offer more assistance and consultation than any other accrediting organization. As a membership organization, we unite and stand with our community of school leaders.

**Centered on Christ and His Kingdom.** We believe the Gospel of the Kingdom applies not only to personal salvation, but also to the submission of all the world and its institutions and ideas to Jesus Christ. (Matt. 4:23; 9:35; 24:14, 28:18-20 Luke 16:16, Acts 8:12). In the words of Abraham Kuyper, "There is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is Sovereign over all, does not cry: 'Mine!'" For this reason, at the center of our mission is Paideia (Ephesians 6)—the central ingredient of a Christian culture and civilization. Paideia has outworkings in the hearts of students, their



families, their churches, their communities, and their nation. Wisdom, eloquence, worldview, or human flourishing are all incidental and subservient to our primary focus on Paideia, which leads to the worship of Christ; and living in submission to Him in all of our callings.

## WHY CHOOSE ACCS ACCREDITATION?

ACCS accredited schools benefit from the collective work we do on behalf of members.

- **The ACCS brand means conservative, transformative classical Christian education** that has a long-standing reputation for excellence. Parents who seek this type of excellence seek ACCS schools. Schools that are publicly vague about their positions may attract a broader range of families, which may be of short-term benefit. But, this eventually creates conflict. With more aligned parents, schools have fewer conflicts down the road. The ACCS invests to help schools educate parents on classical Christian education.
- **We are the primary public advocates for classical Christian education**. Through our websites, media, books, and our publications, we receive nearly a million exposures per year to parents and prospective employees. Hundreds of thousands of books authored by ACCS staff are in print. Tens of thousands of parents depend on our School Finder to locate ACCS accredited schools nearby or as they relocate. ACCS-accredited schools have the advantage of our wide-ranging exposure and acceptance.
- Over a period of more than 20 years, we have amassed the respect and recognition of states, regulators, colleges, and institutions. This affords our accredited schools wide appreciation when this is needed. Our connections allow us to solve problems for schools with institutions, often with a single phone call because we're known and trusted.
- Research shows that ACCS schools are unique. Accreditation with the ACCS means that you can claim the strength shown in the "Good Soil" study, on standardized tests, and on college entrance statistics.
- We're here to support you. When problems arise, we're happy to take your calls and can often find a solution from within our large network of aligned schools.

## ACCREDITATION OPTIONS

The ACCS desires to support all forms of classical Christian schools. Presently, we have distinct programs for the following school types:

- **Standard Accreditation:** Grades K-12. Five days per week. This is our legacy program. (ACCS does not certify or accredit preschool or pre-K programs.)
  - **Limited Grade Level Endorsement:** Grades K-8 or K-6; grades 7-12 or 9-12 five days per week.
  - **Collaborative Model Endorsement:** Two or three days per week at school.
  - **Multi-model Endorsement.** Combination of traditional/collaborative model schools.
  - **Online Endorsement:** (Pilot, release expected in 2026)
- **Concordis Schools Accreditation:** A modified program tailored to Concordis schools.
- **Mentored Accreditation:** We offer immediate accreditation as early as the first year of operation for schools that need to access school choice funding. For schools anticipating their first year of operation, see the separate Mentored Accreditation Handbook.



- **International:** (Through the ACCS International Classical Christian Alliance)

## ACCREDITATION OVERVIEW

### Defining Classical Christian Education

We hold to a vision of the Christian educational tradition that began in Ancient Greece, was further developed by the Romans, informed by the Hebrew tradition, found its defining moment in Christian medieval Europe, was “rediscovered” through Dorothy Sayers, *The Lost Tools of Learning*<sup>1</sup>, and has developed over the decades since it was “reclaimed” in the mid-eighties. Before the mid-eighteenth century, Christian paideia was the purpose of all Western education, supporting the health of Christian civilization. This was based, in part, on Ephesians 6 that commands fathers to raise their children in “the παιδεία (paideia) of the Lord.” Although the study of classical Christian education takes a lifetime, a concise definition can be helpful in focusing attention on vital essentials:

*Our objective is to form a Christian paideia in students. This is done through the medieval liberal arts—primarily the trivium, but also the quadrivium— and the humanities including history, philosophy, literature, classical languages, theology, natural history and natural philosophy. Classical Christian education seeks an inner transformation of the student to Christian reality by shaping virtues, reason, and knowledge. It cultivates the students’ habits of thought and action in order to view the world with certain foundational truths and thereby align their desires with God’s will. The chief end of education is to prepare students to worship and glorify God.*

### Defining Excellent Schools

Schools that exhibit a gracious Christian culture, efficient and humane operations, and a challenging yet achievable academic program that is aligned with classical ideals meet the threshold of excellence. While recent accreditation programs have popularized a lack of “prescriptive” in favor of a “descriptive” approach, in truth, all true accreditation does both. Standards are prescriptive. Accreditation without standards defies the definition of accreditation. How a school chooses to implement those standards, as described through the school’s documents, allows for flexibility. ACCS standards are based on principles rather than practices. Our Diploma Recognition and Teacher Certification standards, created in 2024, offer further flexibility. This flexibility allows us to accredit a wide range of school types. (See our “ACCS Accreditation Standards and Diploma Authorization” document.)

## THE ACCS APPROACH

ACCS provides a comprehensive guide and unambiguous benchmarks through standards and indicators. Our goal is to offer clarity while avoiding unnecessary, redundant, or bureaucratic work. Our standards are divided into those for accreditation (institution), certification (people), and diploma recognition (graduation requirements). These effectively replace accreditation, teacher licensing, and state standards as instituted in public, progressive education.

- Our Accreditation Standards reflect institutional and academic operational excellence.
- Our Teacher Certification standards reflect the qualities of excellent classical pedagogy.
- And, our Diploma Recognition standards ensure that families enjoy a classical Christian course of study.

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<sup>1</sup> Sayers’ “ages and stages” is not a required feature of our classical Christian accreditation, yet many schools have found its implementation helpful.



Because these three areas address quality comprehensively, ACCS schools can answer parent and local government inquiries with confidence. Put together, these standards help us walk alongside our schools with clear and realistic goals identified through the accreditation process—strengthening their ability to serve families with an education trusted for generations.

### **Timeless and Collegial**

The ACCS accreditation process offers practical wisdom and support, uniting schools under a vision shaped by timeless classical Christian practices. Our accreditation teams do more than simply observe and evaluate—they provide real-world help to schools that refine their strengths and overcome challenges. ACCS has developed a fellowship of schools, leaders, and experts who build valued, long-term relationships. Our collegial process respects and encourages schools to build mutual trust and support.

ACCS's accreditation journey assesses school operations and culture through a humble and humane lens—engaging leaders, faculty, and families with interviews, various surveys, classroom visits, and reviews of key documents like handbooks, strategic plans, and budgets. We focus primarily on the classroom and pedagogy.

### **ACCS RECOGNITION**

ACCS has the most recognized and versatile classical Christian education model. In concert with our comprehensive accreditation, certification, and diploma standards mentioned above, the ACCS stands alongside our schools to advocate on their behalf should regulatory challenges arise from oversight agencies.

- In most states, ACCS accreditation is recognized without the need for further recognition. This saves time, money, and helps protect against future intervention by secondary accreditors.
- ACCS accreditation earns schools extended recognition, through the National Council for Private School Accreditation (NCPSA).
- The ACCS offers optional co-accreditation with The Middle States Association Commissions on Elementary and Secondary Schools (MSA-CESS), or The Accrediting Commission for Schools, Western Association of Schools and Colleges (ACS WASC) to achieve the benefits of national accreditation. These may be helpful for college benefits in specific states. We do not recommend these options unless a school has a specific need, as they require additional expense and may subject your school to additional regulation.
- In Arkansas, Georgia, Iowa, Indiana, Minnesota, Missouri, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia, we are expressly recognized, eliminating the need or expense of a secondary accreditation. In Tennessee, we offer the maximum flexibility to schools with both a category II (accreditation) and IV (school membership) recognition. With the extended recognition of NCPSA, Category III recognition is also provided in TN.
- ACCS accreditation opens the door to school choice funding in most states—including Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Indiana, Iowa, Mississippi, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Texas, and more.



Beyond traditional, standard accreditation, the Mentored Accredited process is an introductory status for schools scheduled to open within the next academic year or for unaccredited schools that want guidance as they work toward a full ACCS self-study and site visit within three years. In some states, Mentored Accredited status is sufficient for schools to participate in specific funding programs (such as Education Savings Accounts, tax credits, etc.); however, Mentored Accreditation may not be recognized in all states. (See the Mentored Accreditation Handbook.)

The greatest benefit of ACCS accreditation is the recognition and fellowship that our members have with like-minded schools and parents. Many parents tell us they only seek ACCS Accredited schools when they relocate, and this is backed up by tens of thousands who visit our school location tool each year.

## PROFILE OF A CANDIDATE SCHOOL

A school is ready to pursue accreditation when it has determined to align itself with the mission, vision, and values of the ACCS, and is committed to school improvement. To be recognized as a candidate for accreditation, a school must be an ACCS member school and meet the following qualifications:

- Conforms to all ACCS membership standards
- Is stable in its governance and leadership structure
- Board members (or trustees or owners), who are members of a Christian church and who pledge to support the school's acceptance of the ACCS Statement of Faith.
- Committed to teachers pursuing ACCS teacher certification
- Is legally constituted, with bylaws
- Operates under non-discriminatory admissions and employment policies in accordance with state and federal law
- Is financially sound, able to set aside funds for the fees, team visit costs, and other accreditation-related expenses
- Welcomes input from a visiting team of colleagues
- For Standard Accreditation: been in operation for at least one full academic year with enrolled students
- For Mentored Accreditation: completed approved initial training—see the Mentored Accreditation Handbook

# THE ACCS ACCREDITATION JOURNEY

## YOUR COMPANIONS

ACCS's accreditation journey pairs schools with a seasoned team of at least three trusted companions, each bringing proven expertise. We select team members who best represent schools similar to the one under accreditation. These peers walk alongside schools, offering practical guidance and encouragement to strengthen their mission to form faithful disciples.



## THE TOOLS

The ACCS equips schools with practical tools through a post-visit review with the Head of School, offering actionable insights to strengthen their mission. We also provide an extensive written report that provides helpful insights as well as tools and resources to consult. This hands-on consultation, paired with our team's expertise, empowers leaders to refine their work, policies, practices and mission accomplishment, not just meet standards.

Schools may also make use of ongoing support—headmaster training, board workshops, and tailored guidance —beyond the visit.

## THE OUTCOME

After the team visits, you will receive a report that commends exceptional practices, recommends improvements, and helps resolve discrepancies between the standard and the school's actual practice. The visit team recommends your school's status based on the on-site review. If there are areas to strengthen—such as alignment with your mission, school culture, or teaching practices—the team will outline clear steps for improvement. Your school's ad hoc committee (consisting of the visit committee chairman, the director of accreditation, and the president's designee) will review the recommendation and approve a tailored improvement plan to help you meet your goals.

### Accreditation Status Categories

ACCS works to ensure that the accreditation process helps schools improve across all accreditation standards, making it a blessing for schools. When the Director of Accreditation completes his review of the self-study and assigns a visit team, it is because ACCS believes the school is ready for a standard accreditation term of five years. ACCS does not change its standards for initial or reaccreditation, but it does approach the accreditation process recognizing the differences between the two.

### Standard Program (Legacy Program): Initial ACCS Accreditation:

#### Before the Visit:

1. **Candidate for Accreditation:** Once our Accreditation Director approves your school's application, you'll enter Candidacy status. During this time, your team will work on a self-study to prepare for accreditation. This phase lasts up to two years.

#### After the Visit:

2. **Accredited:** Your school has successfully hosted an on-site review, met or surpassed our accreditation standards, and earned a recommendation for five-year accreditation from the review team that has been approved by the school's ad-hoc committee.

### OR

**Accreditation in Process (Guided Improvements Required):** If your school is seeking initial accreditation and has hosted an on-site review but needs to address a few areas for growth, the review team may recommend "Accreditation in Process." You'll have up to two years to meet specific goals, with support from our team to help you succeed. Once completed, the school is accredited for five years.



1. Schools have the opportunity to appeal adverse decisions.
2. Loss of accredited status is possible if there are significant discrepancies that have not been addressed in the two-year guided improvements period.

### **Standard Program (Legacy Program): Renewal Accreditation**

1. **Candidate for Accreditation:** Once our Accreditation Director approves your school's application, you'll enter Candidacy status. During this time, your team will work on a self-study to prepare for accreditation. This phase lasts one year.

2. **Accredited:** Your school has successfully hosted an on-site review, met or surpassed our accreditation standards, and earned a recommendation for five-year accreditation from the review team that has been approved by the school's ad-hoc committee.

### **OR**

**Accredited (Follow-up Required):** For schools renewing accreditation, if the on-site review identifies significant areas for improvement, the team may recommend "Accredited (Follow-up Required) " You'll have up to two years to address these areas, with guidance to ensure your success. Once completed, the school is accredited for five years.

1. Schools have the opportunity to appeal adverse decisions.
2. For schools seeking to renew their accreditation, loss of accredited status is possible if there are significant discrepancies that have not been addressed in the two-year follow-up period.

### **Mentored Accreditation: Special Program in Arkansas, Indiana, Iowa, Oklahoma, and Texas.**

**Mentored Accreditation:** Especially for start-up or young schools. After your school has completed the mentored training program, you're on track to achieve standard accreditation. You'll have up to three years to meet the remaining standards, with ongoing support from a mentor. (See the Mentored Accreditation handbook.)



## ACCREDITATION PATHWAY





The ACCS accreditation process includes:

- A pre-visit: To help schools seeking initial accreditation identify areas of improvement prior to the self-study.
- Survey: As part of the accreditation process, schools participate in a school culture survey. The school culture survey assesses key elements of your school’s culture, including school climate, academic climate, and mission and vision, to identify strengths and areas for improvement that support student wellbeing, academic success, and civic preparation. By gathering insights from students in grades 3-12, teachers, staff, parents, and administrators, the survey highlights observable and unobservable aspects of school life, such as access to challenging coursework, teacher support, and parent inclusion, through focusing on stakeholders' beliefs and experiences. This survey tool also includes custom questions specifically designed to assess outcomes at ACCS-accredited schools.
- A self-study: This process helps all schools consider a number of important operational, administrative, and pedagogical practices in order to achieve excellence.
- A site visit: The accreditation team will visit classrooms, interview student and faculty groups, and meet with administrators and the board to better understand the atmosphere and culture.
- A post-site report that affirms where the school is doing well and includes recommendations and ideas for school improvement.
- Resources to help with follow-up and mentoring, many of which are provided to members without cost.

## BEGIN THE JOURNEY

To become an ACCS Accreditation candidate school, you will need to do the following:

- Submit the completed application along with the initial fee.
- Schedule a video-call with the Director of Accreditation
- Begin work using our “Self-study builder” tool.
- Plan the Previsit

Thereafter, you will follow the steps outlined in the Timeline on the next page.



## TIMELINE

CANDIDATE SCHOOL	ACCS ACCREDITATION TEAM
<input type="checkbox"/> Join ACCS - Membership is a requirement for submitting application for candidacy <input type="checkbox"/> Receive access for administration and faculty to our extensive online ACCS Member Resource Center	<input type="checkbox"/> Verify qualification and send Certificate of Membership.
<i>3-12 Months before School Visit</i>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Review the Accreditation Handbook and complete application (via online or paper form) <input type="checkbox"/> Submit application fee	<input type="checkbox"/> Application reviewed <input type="checkbox"/> School notified of approval as Candidate for Accreditation <input type="checkbox"/> Video call with Director of Accreditation
<input type="checkbox"/> Schedule Previsit (Initial Accreditation only)	<input type="checkbox"/> Previsit <input type="checkbox"/> Send previsit report <input type="checkbox"/> Video call with school <input type="checkbox"/> Provide options for team visit
<input type="checkbox"/> Gather documentation for Self-Study <input type="checkbox"/> Submit a sample of one of the Standards <input type="checkbox"/> Complete Self-Study using Standards & Indicators through the ACCS online Accreditation Assistant. <input type="checkbox"/> Submit Self-Study through the online Assistant.	<input type="checkbox"/> ACCS Director reviews and responds to sample <input type="checkbox"/> ACCS Director: Review Self-study for completeness & gather additional docs if needed <input type="checkbox"/> ACCS Director: Confirms visit dates <input type="checkbox"/> ACCS Team: Review Self-Study <input type="checkbox"/> Buy airline tickets
<i>2-6 Weeks before School Visit</i>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Prepare for Team School Visit <input type="checkbox"/> Book three hotel rooms for the team <input type="checkbox"/> Arrange for lunches for the team <input type="checkbox"/> Confirm visit schedule with Dir. of Accreditation	<input type="checkbox"/> Review self-study
<i>School Visit</i>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Host two-day Team visit	<input type="checkbox"/> Observe classes, meet with students, teachers, administrators, and board <input type="checkbox"/> Prepare draft report <input type="checkbox"/> Meet with Head of School
<i>Post-Visit</i>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Review the draft report <input type="checkbox"/> Submit response <input type="checkbox"/> Attend ACCS annual conference (optional)	<input type="checkbox"/> Ad-hoc committee vote on visit team's recommendation. Present certificate to school at ACCS Repairing the Ruins annual conference <input type="checkbox"/> Feature the school on website and social media <input type="checkbox"/> Provide mentoring, consultation, and support



## FEES

- Accreditation fee: \$5,000. One-half paid at the start, and one-half paid after the visit.
- Pre-visit: Cost of travel, meals, and lodging for one person: approximately \$1,000
- School Visit: Cost of travel, meals, and lodging associated with hosting the onsite team visit: typically \$2,000 – \$3,000 for a team of three. Schools with more than two sections per grade require four members.
- Accredited schools in states with state private school associations pay additional fees to cover ACCS membership, the school's membership, and ACCS representatives to travel to these meetings. (State associations invoice ACCS for all school members in that state.) Currently, these states are Georgia (GAPSAC), Oklahoma (OPSAC), Texas (TEPSAC), and Virginia (VCPE).

## PREVISIT (Initial Accreditation Only)

As the pre-visit may be scheduled any time after the school is recognized as a candidate for accreditation, the sooner it can be arranged the more time schools have to address issues prior to the visit team's school visit. The self-study does not need to be completed before the previsit.

The pre-visit simulates the experience of the accreditation team's visit. The visits should be scheduled for a typical day of instruction. The school provides the observer with a quick tour of the classroom spaces and a copy of the class schedule. Teachers place a copy of the day's lesson plans on a chair in the back of their room. During the day, the observer will spend 10 to 15 minutes in each class, observing as many teachers as possible. Do your best not to schedule tests or field trips for this day.

It is helpful for us to meet over lunch with everyone involved in writing the self-study. After the classroom visits, the observer will meet with the head of school to share recommendations for training before the site visit, and to review the timeline for the self-study and site visit.

## SELF-STUDY

The self-study is a vital part of the accreditation process as it allows you to systematically identify your school's strengths, align your practices to your mission, and flag areas for improvement. Much of a school's improvement actually occurs during the self-study phase as the team works through the Standards and Indicators—it is a unifying experience. For example, while schools often have practices, they may lack written documents so that practices are known and consistent. The ACCS provides examples of these documents and helpful insights into what should be documented and where. Document samples are readily available in the Member Resource Center.

You will receive specific information for preparing the self-study and a link to our intuitive on-line platform that guides you standard-by-standard in responding to the prompts and uploading documents.

Of course, we are here to assist with insight, resources, or samples at any time during your accreditation process, especially during your self-study phase.

See the ACCS Standards and Diploma Recognition Handbook for a list of the documents and exhibits needed in order to complete the self-study.



## SITE VISIT

The essential task of the visit team is to affirm the schools' compliance with ACCS's accreditation standards and the school's own policies/manuals by observing all teachers, reviewing documentation, and interviewing board members, administrators, teachers, and students. At the conclusion of the visit, the team presents its findings to the head of the school in the form of a brief oral report that includes the recommendation for accreditation and any commendations, recommendations, and/or discrepancies to guide the school toward continuous self-improvement.

A couple of weeks before the visit, the team chair will call the head of school to discuss the team's impressions from the self-study and to review plans for the visit. ACCS will send schools a document detailing their responsibilities in planning for the visit.

Typically, the team travels on day one, conducts observations, interviews and meetings on day two and three, and on day four meets at 8am with the Head of School and then travels home.

## POST-VISIT

- Within two-weeks of the visit, the Head of School will receive the visit team's draft report. This report will have two sections. The first section provides the official findings with discrepancies, recommendations, and commendations. The second section is an advisory based upon the entirety of the process to help schools use the data, information, and observations collected through the process. This section is not binding, but merely advisory.
- Within 30 days the school will provide a written response to the ACCS Director either accepting the report as written or requesting to attach a written statement to it.
- Your school's accreditation lasts for five years, giving you a clear timeframe to showcase your commitment to excellence.
- Schools seeking initial accreditation will be awarded either Accredited (five-year accreditation) OR Accreditation in Process (Guided Improvements Required) status.
- Accreditation in Process (Guided Improvements Required): If your school is seeking initial accreditation and has hosted an on-site review but needs to address a few areas for growth, the review team may recommend "Accreditation in Process (Guided Improvements Required)." You'll have up to two years to meet specific goals, with support from our team to help you succeed. Once completed, the school is accredited for five years.
- Schools seeking renewal accreditation will be awarded Accredited (five-year accreditation) OR Accredited (Follow-up required).
- Accredited (Follow-up required): For schools renewing accreditation, if the on-site review identifies areas for improvement, the team may recommend "Accredited (Follow-up required)" You'll have up to two years to address these areas, with guidance to ensure your success. Once completed, the school is accredited for five years.
- For schools seeking to renew their accreditation, loss of accredited status is possible if there are significant discrepancies that have not been addressed in the two-year follow-up period. Schools have the opportunity to appeal adverse decisions.



## APPEALS

The director of accreditation will forward the recommendation (as to whether the school has met all ACCS accreditation requirements), to the president (or designee) and the visit committee chair (or senior member). Recommendations range from accredited status to accreditation in progress, or monitored accreditation to continued candidacy status. An ad-hoc committee consisting of the visit committee chairman, the director of accreditation, and the president's designee is authorized to make a final determination as to whether or not a school receives accreditation. Should the decision be appealed by the school in question, the appeal will go to the ACCS Board of Directors.

## MAINTAINING ACCREDITATION

- Maintain school membership of the ACCS
- Within one year of receipt of the final report, the school must send a response to each recommendation. Schools are not required to implement the recommendations, however, they are expected to consider and send a report on how the school decided to act on each recommendation.
- Provide updated information during annual school membership renewal
- Report substantive changes to school operations (See Appendix 3)
- Apply for renewal of accreditation about 12 months before renewal date

## STANDARDS REVIEW AND CHANGE PROCEDURES

See the ACCS Policy and Procedure Manual for this information.

## GRIEVANCY PROCEDURES

See the ACCS Policy and Procedure Manual for this information.



# APPENDIX 1 :

## ACCREDITATION STANDARDS

### A. Standard For Mission, Vision, And Planning

Excellent schools create a plan for the school that aligns with their mission and goals and is consistent with the Scriptures and the ACCS vision of classical Christian education. See ACCS Membership Handbook pp. 8-15)

#### A.1. Classical Christian Commitment

Excellent schools promote themselves as classical Christian schools and express their mission statement and statement of faith in ways that reflect the distinctives of classical Christian education.

#### A.2. Future Planning

Excellent schools create a comprehensive long-range plan to improve the school.

### B. Standard For Accountability, Independence, And Stability

Excellent schools are financially accountable, stable, and free to implement their mission unencumbered.

#### B.1. Financial Stability

Excellent schools are financially stable and have ongoing constituent support for the school's mission.

#### B.2. Financial Independence And Outside Influence

A school's income must always support the ongoing, faithful practice of its mission. When a school relies on a single external funding source or a single donor for a significant portion of its annual budget, its board must ensure that the school will not compromise its mission if these funds become either unavailable or available with conditions attached. Likewise, if a third-party scholarship program or a para-government organization provides a single financial source for a significant portion of the school's budget, it must not encumber or threaten the mission of the school.

#### B.3. Financial Management: Review And Report

Excellent schools have clear and appropriate financial policies, controls, and communication, and they conduct at least one financial management review by an independent accounting source during each accreditation cycle.

#### B.4. Ethical Integrity and Resolution

Excellent schools are free of public ethical scandal or they have taken appropriate action to resolve them.

#### B.5. Enrollment And Employment Stability

Excellent schools have sufficient, stable enrollment and employee retention.



## C. Standard For Governance And Administration

Excellent schools have established adequate structures and procedures for governance and administration in order to achieve their mission.

### C.1. Constitutional Organization

Excellent schools have a written constitution and/or bylaws that comprehensively and clearly establish a basis for administration and governance, including explicit lines of authority and areas of responsibility.

### C.2. Board Governance

Excellent schools have a board of governors that determines policy in the areas of administration, business management, academic affairs, and student life. Governance refers to the group or individuals charged with overseeing the direction of the school and fulfilling the legal obligations of governance. This may include an organization, governing body, board of trustees, board of education, or some other configuration. The board manages conflicts of interest held by individual members and arising in its oversight of the school. Church sponsored schools may divide these responsibilities between a board and an administrative team.

### C.3. Trustees (Board Members)

Excellent schools have trustees who are qualified for their position, according to the standard in the school policy. Trustees can articulate the classical Christian vision for their school. The board ensures that all members receive adequate training in classical Christian philosophy and school board practices.

### C.4. Executive Leadership

Excellent schools provide their Head of School with a clear job description. The Head of School effectively serves as the liaison between the board and staff, and is readily available to teachers for support and guidance. By policy, the head of school receives an annual evaluation from the board.

### C.5. Conflict Resolution (Grievance Policies)

Excellent schools base their policies for resolving school conflicts between administrators, faculty, and students on biblical principles.

### C.6. Records

Excellent schools maintain complete, accurate, legible, and secure records. These include board minutes, school personnel files, student files, and administrative reports.

### C.7. Health, Security, And Statutory Requirements

Excellent schools meet state and local health, safety, and security requirements as well as any state statutory requirements for operating a private school.



#### **D. Standard For Cultivation Of Student Virtue And The School Community**

Excellent schools establish a systemic school community that seeks to cultivate Christian virtue and living. (II Peter 1:5–6, Phil 4:8)

##### **D.1. Admissions Process**

Excellent schools exercise admission and retention policies that adhere to the school's mission and that support a biblical Christian ethos within the school.

##### **D.2. Aesthetics**

Excellent schools apply classical aesthetic standards to their classrooms, hallways, facilities, programs, and staff.

##### **D.3. Discipline: Habits And Manners**

Excellent schools maintain and follow discipline and behavioral standards that are adequate, just, and ennobling, derived from Scripture. They emphasize habits, manners, and decorum among students and staff that align with Christian and Western traditions appropriate to the school's mission.

##### **D.4. Activities**

Excellent schools include non-classroom activities that are consistent with the school's vision for providing moral and spiritual training to students.

##### **D.5. Male And Female Roles**

Excellent schools encourage male/female roles that are consistent with biblical Christian virtues.

##### **D.6. *In Loco Parentis***

Excellent schools honor the biblical principle that parents are the authority from which the school operates; therefore, the school works in concert with parents in educating their children.

#### **E. Standard For Curriculum**

Excellent schools establish sufficient classical Christian curriculum requirements to achieve their mission. The content and goals of the entire curriculum are rich, challenging, and of high quality.

##### **E.1. Academic Goals**

Excellent schools meet published goals for student achievement and advancement.

##### **E.2. Program And Graduation Requirements**

Excellent schools have a public, well-organized, complete, and realistic school program that includes graduation requirements.

##### **E.3. Complete Curriculum**

Excellent schools establish sufficient classical Christian curriculum requirements to fulfill their mission. The curriculum's content and goals are of high quality, and they challenge students. Additionally, the school clearly documents the entire curriculum within its curriculum guides.

##### **E.4. Academic Program Requirements**

Excellent classical Christian schools have robust curricular elements required for all students;



these elements include the teaching of phonics, logic, rhetoric, mathematics/quadrivium, science/natural history & philosophy, history, classical languages, great books, writing, poetry, Bible/theology, art, and music.

**E.5. Academic Evaluation And Assessment**

Excellent classical Christian schools regularly evaluate their academic program by administering an annual, appropriate, nationally recognized, standardized exam and other academic assessments that reflect classical pedagogy.

**E.6. Sample Student Work**

The school must provide sample student work along with the self-study.

**F. Standard For Faculty And Instructional Resources**

Excellent schools recognize the essential role of a teacher. Teachers are called to lead students in the way of godliness by their own learning, virtue, and piety. Students follow their teachers in the way of godliness by imitating their example, heeding their precepts, and embracing the knowledge they impart. (Deut 4:9, Ps 78:1-8, Luke 6:40, I Corinthians 11:1, Titus 2:7-8)

**F.1. Faculty Requirements**

Excellent schools ensure that each of their faculty members meet the school's written requirements for the position(s) that they hold.

**F.2. Class Size & Teacher Prep**

Excellent schools assign teaching responsibilities so that the teaching load and the student-faculty ratio is consonant with its stated goals.

**F.3. Books And Ad Fontes**

Excellent schools foster a clear love and respect for reading and books throughout their programs, including Great Books and original sources.

**F.4. Teacher Development**

Excellent schools maintain ongoing, well-established teacher development and certification programs that align with the ACCS vision. This includes taking advantage of ACCS-approved conferences, training, audio/video recordings, and other materials.

**F.5. Pedagogy**

Excellent schools employ teachers who practice effective pedagogy aligned with the principles of classical Christian education, including direct, dialectic, and mimetic instruction. Moreover, they apply methods drawn from historical classical Christian sources—derived from the Medieval Liberal Arts—to instill a Christian paideia in their students. Further standards are assessed through Diploma Recognition.

**F.6. Classroom Observation**

Excellent schools conduct regular formal and informal classroom observations of all teachers. In addition, they carry out separate written evaluations. Clear, written procedures define the process and frequency of both observations and evaluations.



## **APPENDIX 2:**

# **THE SCHOOL VISIT**

Although much may be gleaned about a school from the self-evaluation documentation package, an onsite visit helps to assess all aspects of the school's operation, including, but not limited to, classroom pedagogy, student participation and development, staff relations, parent-teacher relations, financial policies and procedures, board oversight, and community support. The ACCS visitation teams are appointed to help assess the big picture so that schools can get a new vantage point for improvement.

The team reads the documents in the self-study and observes the school in person. This helps align reality with the process.

While onsite, the committee meets with the head of school to discuss selected accreditation standards and develop a written report to encourage and identify further opportunities for growth.

### **HOW ARE VISIT TEAM MEMBERS SELECTED?**

The ACCS Director of Accreditation selects team members based on experience in the accreditation process, considering matching school size while providing a mix of expertise to the committee. Team members are administrators, directors of accreditation, or ACCS board members who serve or have served at an ACCS-accredited school. A person with a recognized area of expertise may be included in the team, especially if a request has been made by a school.

Visit team chairs will have served on teams at least twice before. For first-time team chairs, the Director of Accreditation typically serves as a team member.

### **DO SCHOOLS HAVE INPUT TOWARD TEAM MEMBERS?**

To ensure impartiality ACCS generally selects the school visit team members but will consider school input. We ask that any known conflicts of interest that may occur outside of our knowledge be disclosed by the school. Our intention is that the school will have confidence in the individuals coming to assess their school.

### **HOW MANY MEMBERS ARE ON A TEAM?**

Generally, a team consists of a team chair and two members. Schools with three or more sections per grade will have four members. There may be an additional member on a visit committee for cooperative accreditation visits.



## WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE VISIT TEAM?

The visiting team serves the school by assessing it to confirm strengths and suggest areas for improvement. The team does this by observing all teachers, reviewing documentation, and interviewing board members, administrators, teachers, and students. At the conclusion of the visit, the team presents its findings to the head of the school in the form of a brief oral report that includes the recommendation for accreditation and any commendations, recommendations, and/or discrepancies to guide the school toward continuous self-improvement.

## HOW DO WE PREPARE FOR THE SCHOOL VISIT?

Before the visit, the team chair will call the head of school to discuss the team's impressions from the self-study and to review plans for the visit. ACCS will send schools a document detailing the school's responsibilities in planning for the visit.

Team members make their own travel arrangements. We ask that the school provides hotel accommodation for each member of the team. Two weeks before the visit, the school is asked to send a detailed schedule for the visit.

## WHEN THE TEAM ARRIVES AT THE SCHOOL:

- We begin with a brief tour of school
- We ask that the school provide a private work room on site supplied with coffee, water, and snacks.
- We ask for access to the school's wi-fi
- See the visit team handbook for a list of specific documents needed in the workroom

## HOW SHOULD WE PREPARE THE STAFF AND FACULTY?

The visit team understands that teachers typically feel stress from being observed. Each member likely has their own experience of observing or being observed while teaching. The ACCS has long valued classroom instruction, so teachers may appreciate that we're looking at the "big picture" of the school, not carefully scrutinizing individuals. Most of all, teachers should understand that the visit team's report is never the result of one particular teacher.

When the committee members conduct classroom observations, they hope to see a typical day of instruction. We ask that teachers not schedule tests, field trips, or guest speakers. Encourage teachers to "put their best foot forward" without putting on a "dog and pony show."

Each teacher can expect a 10-15 minute visit from every member of the team. When visitors enter, teachers should just keep teaching and not interrupt the flow of the lesson. Please leave a copy of the day's lesson plan on the chairs at the rear of the room. One or two adult sized chairs are sufficient.

## WHO WILL THE TEAM MEMBERS WANT TO SPEAK WITH?

During the visit, team members will interview the school board, head of school, grammar and upper school head administrator, grammar teachers, secondary teachers, and a few students. Visits to collaborative model schools also include meetings with parents. The school selects the teachers and students according to guidelines in the visit handbook.



## WHAT IS THE TYPICAL SCHEDULE DURING A VISIT?

Two weeks prior to the visit, the head of school and director of accreditation will work collaboratively to arrange the specific visit schedule.

### Day One

Travel day. The visit-team chair will contact the head of school to confirm that all members have arrived and confirm the arrival time at school the following day.

### Days Two and Three

Observations, Interviews, and Meetings

8:00 – 12:00 PM	Observations and document review
12:00 – 1:00 PM	Lunch with students
1:00 – 3:00 PM	Observations
3:00 – 5:00 PM	Interviews: administration and teachers
6:00 – 8:00 PM	Dinner meeting with the board

### Day Four

8:00 – 9:00 AM	Exit interview with the head of school Team members depart immediately thereafter
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## WHAT KIND OF FEEDBACK WILL TEACHERS RECEIVE?

Teachers do not receive direct feedback from the school visit team, other than general encouragement. Commendations, recommendations, and discrepancies are first discussed with the head of school, then communicated through the Accreditation Report.

The accreditation report focuses on patterns of instruction and the implementation of a classical Christian philosophy of education, rather than individual teacher performance or classrooms. Team members observe how the school implements its philosophy of education and hopes to help the school discover areas for commendation and improvement.

## HOW IS REIMBURSEMENT OF TEAM MEMBER EXPENSES HANDLED?

ACCS will reimburse the visit team members for their expenses and then send a request for reimbursement to the school.

## DEFINITIONS FOR ACCREDITATION REPORTS

In the interest of supporting excellent education, our system of notation is intended to clearly communicate where schools should focus their efforts. The term “discrepancy” is an industry standard that simply means a variation from the standard. For many schools, only a few minor discrepancies are encountered and should be expected. Often, these can be simply addressed by the administration with a response to the committee. In cases where the discrepancy will likely impair the student’s education, a major discrepancy may be communicated.

- **Major Discrepancy.** A major discrepancy is defined as the failure of a school to meet one of the criteria listed in Appendix 1, Accreditation Standards. These discrepancies often seriously impair the quality of education.



- **Minor Discrepancy.** A minor discrepancy is defined as the school not adequately meeting one of the Standards listed in Appendix 1, Accreditation Standards. Should the Accreditation Visit Team or the ACCS Accreditation Committee determine that the accumulation of minor discrepancies is so numerous that their aggregate seriously impairs the quality of education, the sum total may be designated as a major discrepancy.
- **Recommendations.** These are suggested changes or improvements that all visit team members agree on, and that are based on experience and directly related to the ACCS Standards for Accreditation. Recommendations must be considered, but they are not required to be implemented. In return visits, some attention may be given to past recommendations to see if there is still an opportunity for improvement. Individual team members may make additional suggestions, but they will not be included as a part of the accreditation report.
- **Commendations.** Our task is as much to recognize excellence as it is to look for areas of improvement. When a school's practices are notably better, our committees mark commendations in the report.

The discrepancies, recommendations, and commendations described above, and categorized by the major accreditation standards, constitute the formal accreditation report.

In keeping with ACCS's goal of excellence and continuous improvement and in recognition of the significant experience of all our accreditation team members in classical Christian education, we want the school to benefit from any additional observations the visit team may have. Therefore, each team will submit an addendum to the report to capture helpful feedback for the school. The team's informal feedback in the addendum will be as follows:

1. Highlights of note about classrooms, teachers, and students. This feedback is provided so the school can both celebrate its people and capture positive lessons learned.
2. Opportunities to improve teaching, culture, curriculum, and processes.
3. Suggestions to help teachers, students, and administrators.

It is important to note that the addendum is provided to the school as a service. It is for the school to decide whether or not use it, as they see fit.



FINDINGS	DEFINITION	RESULT
<b>Commendations</b>	Offered to encourage schools in particular areas of excellence in which they may offer other schools help and encouragement.	No action is required, but we hope in the spirit of community that those areas of commendation will result in future conference talks or training offered by the school.
<b>Recommendations</b>	Offered to help the school improve.	No action is mandated; a written response is required for each recommendation one year after the site visit.
<b>Minor Discrepancy</b>	Not adequately meeting one of the standards. Mildly impairs the quality of education.	Multiple minor discrepancies equate to a major discrepancy. Corrections are typically required through documentation.
<b>Major Discrepancy</b>	The failure of a school to meet one of the standards. Seriously impairs the quality of education.	The school may have no more than two years to correct these discrepancies. Corrections may be required through documentation or a return visit by one team member.



# APPENDIX 3:

## WHAT CHANGES DO SCHOOLS NEED TO REPORT?

### SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE REPORT

Things happen. The sudden loss of a head of school, a board shakeup, or a parent controversy can introduce sudden change in a school community. Often, our teams can help draw resources from other schools or from within the ACCS to help and advise. Also, those who recognize our accreditation require that we stay abreast of these situations. For these reasons, we require that schools inform us when there is:

- A change in the school's legal name or EIN (Employer Identification Number)
- A change in ownership or control, including the replacement of half or more of the voting board members.
- A change in legal status (e.g., from nonprofit to for-profit, bankruptcy, church-sponsored to independent, etc.) or form of control of the institution
- A substantial change in the school's established mission.
- A material change in the school's financial position that threatens the school's ability to remain a going concern or otherwise threatens the school's ability to support its operations effectively
- The merger of two schools, whether only one or both are currently accredited
- Change in grade level configuration. Including the addition of a new school division that is not yet accredited (e.g., high school) or a grade that opens up a new division (e.g., grade 9)
- Addition of courses or programs that represent a significant departure in either the content or method of delivery. This program change includes a change in the type of school or in the curricular identity of the school (e.g., International Baccalaureate, Classical, ACE, etc.) or a change or significant addition(s) to program delivery (e.g., percentage of online courses)
- Notification of adverse action taken or threatened by a state or other accrediting agency
- The unplanned or sudden removal of a head of school.

Note: New board members added since the last accreditation (or accreditation renewal) should confirm that they support the school's agreement with the ACCS Statement of Faith.

### WHAT SHOULD A SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE REPORT INCLUDE?

Substantive change reports should include a brief narrative about the nature of the change, the decision-making process leading to the change (including reference to the strategic plan), any impact on the standards or critical indicators, and the anticipated benefits of the change. In most cases, a simple email to the ACCS Director of Accreditation is sufficient.

#### Process

The Director of Accreditation will review the change notice and supporting documents, and may request additional documentation (for example, financial issues could require completing a financial integrity report), and may also require the school to host a visit.

Most changes will have no impact on accreditation status, however, the review process evaluates whether



the change(s) jeopardize the school's ability to meet accreditation standards and whether the school's status should be maintained.



# APPENDIX 4: VARIATIONS, EXTRA RECOGNITION, & FLEXIBILITY

## VARIATIONS

ACCS offers variations to our standard K-12 accreditation to provide extra opportunities for schools to distinguish themselves among other schools using the same school model. Here are additional standards for Collaborative, Multi-Site, and Multi-Model schools.

## COLLABORATIVE MODEL SCHOOLS

In addition to the Accreditation Standards that are applied to all schools, the following are standards that Collaborative Model schools must also address in order to gain the Collaborative School endorsement.

### Philosophy

ACCS values the creation of learning communities, particularly in the upper school where discussion, logical thinking, and rhetoric are frequently practiced. We also recognize that students typically need more teacher assistance given the challenge of academic subjects in the upper school.

### Definition

Collaborative (also “Shared Instruction,” “University Model Schools™”): Schools that operate with non-traditional schedules or hours to share responsibility for education more heavily with parents. These schools, if they offer K–12 programs, may grant ACCS-authorized high-school diplomas. Schools have the option to issue authorized diplomas with this statement: “Diploma authorized by the Association of Classical Christian Schools.”

### Eligibility

Schools must be diploma-granting institutions (or certificate-awarding institutions if a K-6 or K-8 program). This endorsement is for institutions that specify a program of courses that qualifies students to receive a diploma (or certificate). ACCS does not accredit homeschool programs or “co-ops.”

Grammar school (i.e., grades 1-6) students spend on average at least 14 hours per week on-campus. Logic (i.e., grades 7-8), and Rhetoric (i.e., grades 9-12) students spend on average at least 21 hours per week on-campus. (ACCS will consider appeals from schools that have at least 17 hours per week.)

Note: Schools who received ACCS-accreditation prior to May, 2020, with two-day per week programs were exempt from this requirement.

Note: Diplomas (and diploma-tracks) are for full-time students. Collaborative schools often have students taking courses a la carte who would not receive a diploma.

1. **Diploma Track:** Collaborative model schools have the same diploma standard as five-day per week schools. See standard E. 2.



2. **Time in Class and Home:** The school provides sufficient hours of instruction for all students. Schools ensure that students use time off-campus for study and learning.
  - a. Principle: Believing that time is related to learning, schools require students to spend sufficient time each week in study.
  - b. Indicators: The school has a weekly schedule identifying days when students are required to attend class on-campus. Schools also have clear expectations for additional days and times for learning when students are off-campus. Schools have developed methods to ensure students are accountable for study when off-campus.

Documentation should include:

- a. Class schedules along with written explanations to help the reviewer understand the specific amount of time students meet for classes on campus
  - b. Lesson plans for each grade level for one week, along with directions to parents and/or students for work required for off-campus days.
  - c. Instructions to parents and sample documents (e.g., student’s work, written papers, tests, and quizzes, etc.) used by the school to ensure that students spend time learning while off-campus.
3. **Assessment:** Regardless of the particular form used, schools must have a plan for assessing student learning.
    - a. Principle: Students must receive regular assessments so that teachers, students, and parents may know how well students have learned the course material.

Indicators: Schools have identified specific school-wide practices for conducting regular assessments that ensure reliable and authentic measures of student learning. If not under the supervision of teachers, schools have developed mandatory procedures that ensure that student learning is being accurately assessed

Documentation should include:

- a. Administrative guidelines (or policies) provided to teachers on how to conduct student assessments, including when to test in class and when to test at home.
  - b. Written guidelines for parents and students that explain required testing procedures.
4. **Parent Training:** Collaborative schools should expect and require the participation of parents to ensure quality learning occurs when students are not on-campus.
    - a. Principle: Schools provide guidance and direction to ensure students learn specific content that follows the school’s mission and philosophy of education. Students require accountability to ensure the best use of their time.
    - b. Indicators: Admission policies communicate specific expectations to parents for their involvement in student learning.
    - c. Schools provide formal training for parents, often referred to as “co-teachers.”



Documentation should include:

- a. Admission materials that explain the parent’s responsibility for student learning.
- b. A schedule of dates and times and a description of the training that the school provides to parents.
- c. Teacher created or other curriculum materials used for training parents to teach specific subjects.
- d. Examples of times when the school has disenrolled or not re-enrolled students due to lack of cooperation from parents



## MULTISITE SCHOOLS

Multisite schools are like local franchises, with one organization running multiple contained schools spread across a geographical area within an hour's drive. Network schools are different. They operate multiple schools widely dispersed (more than an hour apart), more like a national or regional franchise.

In addition to the Accreditation Standards that are applied to all schools, the following are standards that schools with multiple sites under a single accreditation should consider. We treat these multi-sites as one school for purposes of the accreditation report.

### Philosophy

To ensure a focus on instruction during site visits, ACCS has always invested significant time in classroom observations. The multisite process is intended to facilitate communication and simplify preparation for accreditation. As always, ACCS wants to maintain the same quality when accrediting multisite schools by spending time visiting each campus.

### Definition

**Multi-site:** Two or more campus locations in which the same grades operate at different physical locations under a single governing authority. Schools with multiple locations, say with K-6 on one campus and 7–12 on another campus are not considered multi-site. Multisite visits may be accommodated for different school models (conventional, collaborative, special needs, etc.).

### Schools qualify as “multisite” if:

1. The organization has more than one building located at different addresses that house the same grade level.
2. The organization has a single board that oversees both facilities.
3. The organization has a single employee reporting to the board with authority over both facilities.
4. The facilities are located in an area that would allow visit-team members to travel from a central location, spend a full day at each facility, and return to a central location at the end of the day.

### Schools do not qualify as “multisite” if:

1. The organization has multiple facilities serving a single succession of grades. (For example, grades K–6 in one location and grades 7–12 in another location.)
2. The organization operates as an online school or homeschool.
3. The organization is a “Franchise” school that has multiple locations outside of a single metro. These schools would be visited as individual schools, although some shared documentation in the self-study will be permitted if the schools are ready for visits at the same time.

### Ability to Conduct the School Visit:

School facilities must be located in the same general vicinity, such that one visit team may visit different sites on consecutive days during the same visit. The team must see all campuses during the visit and be able to gather each night for discussion to assess consistency between sites. Sometimes, visits may need to be extended—for this reason, when school systems of more than three schools apply, they may require larger teams to allow each team member to visit at least three sites. The number of visit committee members will allow for each visitor to visit three different sites. The total time required may not exceed five days (allowing two days for travel).



## Costs

The typical accreditation fee provides for a team of three members. (Four total days are required, two travel days and two visit days.) The size of the team is determined by the director of accreditation in consultation with the head of school. If the team must be larger than normal for these visits, there will be additional expenses for additional members. (Travel and housing expenses will be paid by the school as usual.)

If a longer visit is required to see additional sites, an additional \$2,000 will be assessed for each additional campus.

## Additional Standards for Multisite Schools

**MS1. Rationale.** The school should inform the committee why they have decided to establish different school sites rather than one location.

1. Principle: When assessing the effectiveness of a school, it is helpful to understand the founding vision and history of a school or a school system.
2. Indicators: In addition to a historical summary, the school should have founding principles in bylaws or other documents.
3. Documentation should include:
  - a. School bylaws (or other documents) with references to pertinent sections.
  - b. Written history included in promotional materials.
  - c. Any philosophy statements that address founding principles.

**MS2. Administrative Resources:** The school must have sufficient administrative resources to achieve its mission. The school must demonstrate that each campus administrator meets the school's written requirements for the position(s) that they hold.

1. Definitions: Chief administrator—the board's sole employee. Campus administrator—a person responsible for the administration of a specific campus, who may or may not be located on that campus and may or may not be full-time. Typically, this person would report to the board's main employee.
2. Principle: Campus administrators can be at only one campus location at a time. The greater the number of campus locations, the greater the need to employ qualified, capable campus administrators who can train, observe, and guide teachers, thereby directly impacting the quality of classroom instruction and the culture of the school
3. Indicators:
  - a. The presence of a campus administrator at each location.
  - b. Campus administrators have sufficient authority to assist teachers in working with parents, have input into teacher retention, address school safety and matters of emergencies.
4. Documentation:
  - a. List the number of separate classroom buildings and the distance between them.
  - b. Explain the hours when a school administrator is on campus and identify the hours when a school site lacks a campus administrator
  - c. Provide job descriptions for the chief administrator and campus administrator.



**MS3. Constancy of Mission:** The school entity has in place a means of communication and a process for accountability to ensure a unity of purpose and consistent focus on the mission and/or vision at all locations.

1. Principle: Parents and students expect to receive consistency in school programs. Ensuring a purposeful plan for implementing the school's mission is a key to ensure this occurs.
2. Indicators:
  - a. Schools have a regular means for sharing common communication from the central office.
  - b. Schools have a means for assessing implementation of the mission at each location.
3. Documentation should include:
  - a. Description of the function of the central administrative office, including examples of central office communications
  - b. Description and examples of reports from campus administrators to the main office.
  - c. Describe how often regular meetings of all school administrators are conducted and common topics for those meetings.

**MS4. Constancy of Instruction and Learning.** The school takes deliberate steps to ensure consistent instruction and student learning across the schools.

1. Principle: Parents and students expect to receive consistency in academic programs across all campuses. The quality of instruction provided at each site should be similar. Ensuring consistency in student learning is important for the reputation and success of the school. A student should be able to transfer from one site to another without finding significant academic differences.
2. Indicators:
  - a. Campus administrators are not treated as independent operators.
  - b. Campus administrators are guided by clear expectations for curriculum and instruction.
3. Documentation should include:
  - a. Directions given to campus administrators regarding areas of student discipline, curriculum and implementation, and pedagogy.
  - b. Means of monitoring work at individual campuses to ensure consistent learning at each site.
  - c. Methods of assessment used by the school entity to determine whether the student experience at each site is consistent with the school's mission and vision.
  - d. For those accreditation standards required from all schools, multisite schools must provide information for each specific site.
  - e. The self-study for these standards should provide campus-specific information.



## MULTI-MODEL SCHOOLS

In addition to the Accreditation Standards that apply to all schools, the following are standards that schools operating multiple models included on a single accreditation visit must also address. ACCS desires to accommodate multi-model schools with a single self-study and a coordinated site visit. The visit committee will write one report for the organization, including an additional section providing a general summary of each school.

### Philosophy

To ensure a focus on instruction during on-site visits, ACCS has always invested significant time in classroom observations. The multi-model process is intended to facilitate communication and simplify preparation for accreditation. At the same time, ACCS wants to maintain the same quality in assessing multi-model schools by spending time visiting each school.

### Definition

Systems where school boards operate multiple educational models—conventional, collaborative, special education, sex-segregated, special focus (outdoor), etc.

### Schools Qualify as Multi-Model if:

1. The organization has one school board overseeing at least two separate schools. (For example, a conventional five-day per week school and a second collaborative model school.)
2. Each school has distinct admission requirements.
3. Each school has distinct courses of study and curriculum guides.
4. Each school has distinct graduation requirements for earning a diploma.

#### Notes:

- These schools may or may not share a facility.
- Students may or may not be able to transfer from one school to the other.

### Ability to Conduct the School Visit

School facilities must be located in the same general vicinity, such that one visit team may visit different sites on consecutive days during the same visit. For this reason, when school networks of more than three schools apply, they will require larger teams to allow each team member to visit at least three sites. The total time required for a visit does not exceed five days (allowing two days for travel).

### Costs

The typical accreditation fee provides for a team of three individuals who visit one school site. Four days are normally required, two travel days and two visit days. If a longer visit is required to see additional sites, an additional \$1,000 total will be assessed per each additional campus.

### Additional Standards for Multi-Model Schools:

**MM1. Rationale:** The school should inform the committee why it has decided to develop separate schools.

1. Principle: When assessing the effectiveness of a school, it is helpful to understand the founding vision and history of a school or a school system.



2. Indicators: In addition to a historical summary, the school may include founding principles in school bylaws
3. Documentation should include:
  - a. School bylaws with references to pertinent sections
  - b. Written history included in promotional materials
  - c. Any philosophy statements that address founding principles

**MM2. Administrative Resources:** The school must have sufficient administrative resources to achieve its mission. The school must demonstrate that each campus administrator meets the school's written requirements for the position(s) that they hold.

1. Definitions: Chief Administrator—the board's sole employee. Campus administrator—a single person responsible for the administration of a specific campus, who may or may not be located on that campus and may or may not be full-time. This person would typically report to the board's single employee.
2. Principle: Chief administrators are only able to be in one campus location at a time. The greater the number of campus locations, the greater the need to employ qualified, capable campus administrators who can train, observe, and guide teachers, thereby directly impacting the quality of classroom instruction and the culture of the school.
3. Indicators:
  - a. The presence of a Campus Administrator at each location.
  - b. Campus administrators have sufficient authority to assist teachers in working with parents, have input into teacher retention, address school safety and matters of emergencies.
  - c. Written requirements for hiring administrators which include either a specific job description or general standards of conduct, knowledge and ability consistent with the authority which the person has been hired to act on.
  - d. The campus administrator should report to the board's single employee.
4. Documentation:
  - a. List the number of separate classroom buildings and the distance between them.
  - b. Explain the hours when a school administrator is on campus and identify the hours when a school site lacks a building administrator.
  - c. Provide job descriptions for these positions.

**MM3. Constancy of Mission:** The school entity has in place a means of communication and a process for accountability to ensure a unity of purpose and consistent focus on the mission and vision at all locations

1. Principle: Parents and students expect to receive consistency between school programs across all campuses. Ensuring a common vision for implementing the school's mission is key to ensure that this occurs
2. Indicators: Schools have a regular means for sharing common communication from the central office. Schools also have a means for assessing the implementation of the mission statement at each location.
3. Documentation should include:
  - a. Description of the function of the central administrative office. Examples of central office



communications

- b.** Description and examples of reports from campus administrators to the main office.
- c.** Describe how often regular meetings of all school administrators are conducted and common topics for those meetings.
- d.** For those accreditation standards required from all schools, multisite schools must provide information for each specific site.
- e.** The self-study for these standards should provide school-specific information.



## EXTRA RECOGNITION: REGIONAL ACCREDITING ORGANIZATIONS

### GEORGIA SCHOOL ACCREDITATION ADDENDUM (GAPSAC)

ACCS Board Approval: January 23, 2015

**Guidelines:** The following criteria are to be used as minimum acceptable requirements to approve an ACCS school for accreditation under this Georgia Addendum in addition to the requirements of Policy 5.3.1, the ACCS Accreditation Policy (i.e., ACCS Accreditation Handbook).

When Georgia schools apply for ACCS accreditation, they must ensure the following GAPSAC requirements are met, and these will be verified in the self-study and by the ACCS visit team during the school visit.

GAPSAC Requirements and References (in addition to the ACCS Accreditation Standards):

- A.** Under paragraph *B. j. Library/Media Center*: “In clear realization of the increasing need of students to have computer skills in acquiring information, the school should implement and follow a plan to provide computers sufficient in number to give students instruction in accessing the Internet.” (GAPSAC standards, p. 23, item j.6)
- B.** Under paragraph *B. j. Library/Media Center*: “Internet use and access should be governed by the school in accord with the school’s philosophy and objectives.” (GAPSAC standards, p. 23, item j.7)
- C.** Under paragraph *B. j. Library/Media Center*: “Each school shall spend a minimum of \$30 per student or \$500 per year on library/media center materials (whichever is less).” (GAPSAC standards, p. 24, item j.8)
- D.** Under paragraph *B. o.: Required Standardized Testing*: “Reports of this testing shall be included in the annual report to the accrediting organization to which the school belongs.” (GAPSAC standards, p. 26, item o.3)
- E.** Each school shall comply with minimum kindergarten age policy.



## IOWA SCHOOL ACCREDITATION ADDENDUM

Iowa Department of Education Approval: April 1, 2024

Revised: November 2025

The independent accreditation process in Iowa is based on Iowa Code 256.11 subsection 16.

**Agency Responsibilities:** [Iowa Code 256.11](#) subsection 16 means the Iowa Department of Education relies on the independent accrediting agency to determine for the following:

- Identify new schools participating in the independent accrediting agency's accreditation process.
  - Each accrediting agency determines the extent of meaningful participation required for a school to be recognized as independently accredited. The DOE must defer to the accrediting agency which makes this decision. **If the school is on the list submitted to the DE by April 1, we will consider them accredited.** 281 IAC 12.10(1)
- Verify that the independent accrediting agency continues to accredit the school annually.
- Inform the Department when a school's accreditation status changes, whether the change was voluntary or involuntary, to accredited, not accredited, or any measure of provisional accreditation.
- Ensure the school is meeting all assurances.

### Agency responsibilities (Assurances):

- The independently accredited nonpublic school assures its compliance with all requirements for nonpublic schools contained in the Code of Iowa and Iowa Administrative Code, except for the general accreditation standards contained in Iowa Code section 256.11.
- The independently accredited nonpublic school assures its [enforcement of compulsory attendance laws](#).
- The independently accredited nonpublic school assures its compliance with all statutory health and safety laws concerning school facilities, including compliance with state and local fire and building codes.
- The independently accredited nonpublic school assures its compliance with all laws protecting student health and safety, including compliance with statutes and rules concerning Department of Human Services (DHS) child care licensing, [abuse of students](#), [bullying and harassment](#), [corporal punishment](#), and [physical restraint and physical confinement and detention](#).
- The independently accredited nonpublic school assures its compliance with all applicable federal, state, and [local civil rights laws](#)
- To the extent that it requests [assistance or services](#) for or on behalf of its students from a local school district or an area education agency, the independently accredited nonpublic school assures that it will comply with all requirements imposed on nonpublic schools accredited by the Iowa State Board of Education for the receipt of such assistance or services.

### Review of School Responsibilities:

- Register via the Edportal on the Department of Education's website.
- Complete annual assurances to comply with statutory health and safety requirements for school facilities.
- Maintain a brick and mortar space for face to face instruction. [281 IAC 15.10\(6\)](#)



- Existing NonPublic Schools Meet with resident district to complete consultation agreement.
- Meet accreditation criteria as determined by the independent accrediting agency.
- Ensure ESA funding requests match accreditation , eg., grade level.
- **Student Reporting** Your school is required to submit enrollment information to the Department in fall, winter and spring each year.
- **Fall BEDS and Spring BEDS** Non student level data will be collected in the fall (October) and spring (May June) in the BEDS applications in the Iowa Education Portal.
- **Pupil Transportation Services** Vehicles that are used to transport students in Iowa are required to meet Iowa’s school bus construction standards. Please contact [State Director for Pupil Transportation](#) before purchasing vehicles to ensure they meet, or are able to meet, Iowa’s construction standards. Drivers who operate vehicles that transport students are required to hold an authorization.
- Students will be required to complete Federal testing requirements. This includes ISASP and ELPA21.



## TENNESSEE SCHOOL ACCREDITATION ADDENDUM

June 2024 Revised

**Guidelines:** The following criteria are to be used as minimum acceptable requirements to approve an ACCS school for accreditation under this Tennessee Addendum in addition to the ACCS Accreditation Standards

### 0520-07-02-.03 CATEGORY II: AGENCY ACCREDITATION.

ACCS is the only classical Christian accrediting agency listed in Category II. [Click here](#) to see the list of approved accrediting agencies here.

“(1) Category II schools are approved by an agency whose ability to accredit schools in Tennessee is approved by the State Board. The Department shall review and recommend to the State Board for approval a list of private school accrediting agencies. Agencies approved by the State Board to accredit Category II private schools shall be listed in State Board Policy 3.500. Agencies seeking approval by the State Board shall submit an application to the Department and meet all requirements set forth in this Rule to be recommended for approval.”

“Regardless of which method a school candidate selects for approval, all categories must do the following:”

1. Once a school candidate has secured a school site location, send an email to [Private.Schools@tn.gov](mailto:Private.Schools@tn.gov) to initiate the appropriate type of fire safety inspection by the State Fire Marshal’s Office (SFMO) prior to school approval.
2. All non-public schools must conduct fingerprint or social security number based criminal history checks for teachers and staff. The checks must also include a check of the Tennessee Sex Offender Registry, National Sex Offender Registry, and the Tennessee Department of Health Abuse Registry. To access information on how to obtain fingerprint based checks, visit TBI’s Background Checks webpage. A public search of TNCompass will allow school administrators to determine if an applicant has had a Tennessee educator license suspended or revoked for misconduct.
3. Non-public schools are responsible for ensuring compliance with all health and safety rules, laws, and regulations. Food safety inspections are required in schools that prepare and serve food. Contact the local health department for information on required inspections.”

“A school candidate must obtain a certificate of accreditation or letter of approval before being added to the directory as an approved non-public school option.”

**A.** Publish and follow minimum standards for approved schools, including, at a minimum:

**a.** Attendance.

- i. Each school shall comply with the requirements of T.C.A. § 49-6-3007 regarding the reporting of the names, ages, and addresses of all pupils in attendance to the director of schools for the public school district in which the student resides.
- ii. Each school shall ensure students entering Kindergarten have reached five (5) years of age on or before August 15 pursuant to T.C.A. § 49-6-201(b)(3), unless the principal or head of school finds through evaluation and testing, at the request of



the parent or legal guardian, that a child who is five (5) on or before September 30 is sufficiently mature emotionally and academically to enter Kindergarten and the school has a policy permitting testing by the principal or head of school to obtain early admission to Kindergarten.

**b. Facilities, Health, and Safety.**

- i. Each school shall comply with all laws, rules and regulations, and codes of the city, county, and state regarding planning of new buildings, alterations and health and safety.
- ii. Each school shall observe all fire safety regulations and procedures promulgated by the Tennessee Fire Marshal's Office.
- iii. Each school shall conduct at least one (1) fire safety inspection annually based on the fire safety inspection checklist developed by the Tennessee Fire Marshal's Office, and maintain copies of the inspection reports, including findings of non-compliance and actions taken to comply for review by the Tennessee Fire Marshal's Office.
- iv. Each school shall construct, remodel, renovate, expand, or modify school buildings or other structures in accordance with any state and/or federal requirements applicable to the school regarding building accessibility, which may include, but is not limited to, the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.
- v. Each principal or head of school shall comply with the requirement of Department of Health Rules and T.C.A. § 49-6-5001 that each child enrolled in school be vaccinated against disease, subject to any applicable exemptions set forth in State law or Department of Health Rules.
- vi. Each school shall conduct a criminal history records check prior to employment for any person applying for or holding a position as a teacher or any other position requiring proximity to school children. Criminal history records checks shall also be required for any person or employee of the person, corporation, or other entity who contracts with a school and who will have direct contact with school children or access to the grounds of the school when children are present. The criminal history records check shall be fingerprint based or social security number based and shall also include a check of the Tennessee and National Sex Offender Registries and the Tennessee Department of Health Abuse Registry. Schools may also search the Tennessee educator licensure database (TNCompass) to determine if an applicant for a teaching position or any other position requiring proximity to school children has had a Tennessee educator license suspended or revoked for misconduct.
- vii. Each school director shall comply with the reporting requirements set forth in T.C.A. § 49-5-417 and State Board Rule 0520-02-03-.09 with regard to any employee who possesses an active or expired Tennessee educator license.

**c. Curriculum and Graduation.**

- i. The instructional program shall include, but not be limited to, the areas of English language arts, mathematics, social studies, and science. Additionally, schools are



encouraged to offer art, music, health and physical education, and world language.

- ii. Each school shall use textbooks and instructional materials that adequately cover all subjects in the school's instructional program.
- iii. Each high school shall adopt a graduation requirements policy requiring students to earn at least the minimum number of total credits required for graduation set by the State Board in Rule 0520-01-03-06. The school's policy shall also require students to achieve the required minimum number of credits set by the State Board in Rule 0520-01-03-06 in the subjects of English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. This provision shall not be construed as requiring the same courses in the subjects of English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies that are required for public schools. The school shall determine the additional subject areas and credits necessary for graduation from high school as set forth in the school's graduation requirements policy to meet or exceed the minimum total number of credits set by the State Board in Rule 0520-01-03-06.
- iv. At least once every school year, each school shall give a nationally standardized achievement test covering the areas of English language arts and math to each pupil in third (3rd) through eleventh (11th) grades; the results must be communicated to teachers and parents and kept on file at the school for one (1) calendar year. Examples of nationally standardized achievement tests include ACT/SAT and benchmark assessments. Schools may identify alternate assessments for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities.

**d. Teacher Licensure and Evaluation.**

- i. Each school shall ensure that all teachers and principals are appropriately licensed or credentialed, as defined by the accrediting agency.
- ii. Teaching experience shall count toward qualifying years of experience in the Department's Educator Data Management System.
- iii. Each school shall develop procedures for evaluation of all teachers and principals.
- iv. Each school shall provide a sufficient number of appropriately qualified administrators, supervisors, and other personnel, which may include, but is not limited to, librarians, and school counselors, for the student body served.

**e. Administrative Rules.**

- i. Each school shall maintain an operating schedule that includes the minimum number of instructional days (180) and minimum number of hours per day (6 ½) required of public schools, In accordance with T.C.A. § 49-6-3004, a school that exceeds the required six and one-half (6 ½) hours of instructional time per day for the full academic year shall be credited with the additional instructional time in amounts up to, but not exceeding, thirteen (13) instructional days each school year. Such excess instructional time shall be used in accordance with T.C.A. § 49-6-3004(e)(1). Schools that are unable to meet the required 180 instructional day requirement due to natural disaster or serious outbreak of illness affecting or endangering students or staff during the school year may request a waiver of the minimum instructional day requirement from the school's accrediting agency.



- ii. Each school shall comply with applicable state and federal laws prohibiting discrimination on the basis of disability, including but not limited to the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
- iii. Each school shall develop and implement a written policy on promotion and retention. The written policy shall be communicated to students and parents via the school handbook.
- iv. Each school shall ensure that class sizes do not exceed the class size maximums set forth in state law.
- v. Each school shall maintain complete and accurate permanent records of the following for all students, attendance, disciplinary matters, work completed while enrolled at the school, and promotion or retention determinations.
- vi. Each school shall provide periodic reports of student needs and academic progress to parents or legal guardians during each school year.

Note: ACCS-accredited schools simultaneously receive accreditation from NCPSA without additional expense or work. NCPSA is recognized as a Category III.



## TEXAS STATE SCHOOL ACCREDITATION ADDENDUM (TEPSAC)

ACCS Board Approval: March 11, 2014

**Guidelines:** The following criteria are to be used as the minimum acceptable requirements to approve an ACCS school for accreditation in the state of Texas in addition to the requirements of Policy 5.3.1, the ACCS Accreditation Policy (i.e., ACCS Accreditation Handbook).

- A. School Involvement.** The school seeking accredited status must document that the entire school participated in preparation for the accreditation visit. It is recognized that not everyone will participate to the same degree, but everyone on the school staff must participate.
- B. Make-up of an Accreditation Committee.** All assigned accreditation committee members must either be a member of the ACCS Board of Directors, the ACCS Director of Accreditation, the head of school of an ACCS-accredited school, or a head of school from a prospective candidate school for ACCS accreditation. The assigned committee will consist of at least two experienced members and at least one inexperienced member who will be using the visit as a training experience. In addition, at least one party must be a non-policy making member.
- C. Training of Accreditation Committee Members.**
  - a.** All accreditation committee members are required to have read the most current version of the ACCS Accreditation Handbook, which will be forwarded to them at least two months prior to the scheduled school visit.
  - b.** One of the experienced team members will be assigned responsibility of overseeing the inexperienced committee member and helping instruct him in what to look for.
- D. Appeals Process.**
  - a.** There will be no change in the current accreditation status of a school pending disposition of an appeal.
  - b.** The appealing school has the right to a hearing before the appeal body, either the ACCS Board of Directors, or an Executive Committee of the Board assigned for that purpose.
  - c.** The ACCS Board of Directors is the final arbiter in assigning ACCS-accredited status to ACCS member schools. If a school is being recommended for anything other than accredited status, they may appeal the report and recommendation from the accreditation committee to the ACCS Board of Directors. The school will have 30 days to make their appeal in writing and provide sufficient documentation to substantiate their appeal. This appeal will be forwarded to the ACCS Board via the president.
  - d.** The ACCS Director of Accreditation will review and forward the appeal and supporting materials to the ACCS President, with his recommendation.
  - e.** The ACCS Board of Directors shall review the appeal and supporting documentation and make a determination on the appeal.



- f.** The ACCS Director of Accreditation shall respond in writing on behalf of the board of directors to the head of the appealing school with the board's final determination. A copy of the final disposition shall be sent to TEPSAC along with a copy of the appeal and the school's supporting documentation.
- g.** Major Discrepancy. A major discrepancy is defined as the failure of a school to sufficiently meet one or more of the criteria listed in Section 2 Standards.
- h.** Participation in TEPSAC. ACCS will actively participate in the governance of TEPSAC, and may do so through designation of a proxy to act on its behalf. The designated proxy does not have the authority to commit either the resources of ACCS or to make any policy binding ACCS and its association members.



## VIRGINIA STATE SCHOOL ACCREDITATION ADDENDUM (VCPE)

Approved by the VCPE Board of Directors, April 22, 2021

**Guidelines:** The following criteria are to be used as the minimum acceptable requirements to approve an ACCS school for accreditation in the Commonwealth of Virginia in addition to standards listed in Section 2.

The visit team chair should ensure by way of the accreditation review that the school adheres to the following indicators:

- A. All accredited schools must have non-discriminatory policies and practices in admissions, employment and all other aspects of school operation as provided by law.

GUIDANCE: This standard is addressed on the application for school accreditation.

- B. Each accredited school is subject to periodic on-site reviews and will have an accredited status for no longer than seven (7) years.

GUIDANCE: This standard is addressed by the guidelines for ACCS school accreditation. Visit committees may recommend a maximum time of five years for renewal accreditation.

- C. In order to be eligible to be accredited, a school must be operating in Virginia as a school or as a virtual school serving Virginia students for at least 12 months before beginning the accreditation process.

GUIDANCE: This standard is addressed by the guidelines for ACCS school accreditation. Schools must be in existence for four years to meet the conditions for candidacy. (See the application for school accreditation.)

- D. A school must be in compliance with appropriate state and federal legal requirements including but not limited to the information provided in the most recent edition of Virginia Law and Private Schools: A Guide to Opening and Operating a Private School in Virginia.

GUIDANCE: The school should ensure that one person on staff has reviewed the law guide.

- E. An accredited school must adhere to the maintenance and disposition of student and staff records including having policies that address:
  - a. Required information that must be included records;
  - b. Storage of records;
  - c. Handling records if school closes.
  - d. Assignment of a custodian of records.

GUIDANCE: The school must have a written policy which provides specific guidance on the retention of student records in the event the school should close and must include at a minimum: the custodian organization; contact name; contact title; address; phone; and email address.

- F. An accredited school must have a school calendar that adheres to compulsory attendance laws and includes student and teacher schedules.

GUIDANCE: Review the school calendar to ensure that it meets legal requirements.



- G. An accredited school must have policies on staff qualifications including but not limited to:
- a. Job descriptions;
  - b. Staff handbook;
  - c. Performance evaluations;
  - d. Fingerprint criminal background checks, which deem employee “eligible for employment” (on all employees full-time or part-time);
  - e. Child Abuse & Neglect Registry Search (on all employees full-time or part-time).

GUIDANCE: Should be evident in policy and practice. Examine sample personnel files to check compliance.

- H. An accredited school must maintain records demonstrating professional personnel are CPR, First Aid and AED certified.
- a. Medication Administration Training;
  - b. Assessment and Management of Concussions; and,
  - c. Prevention and Mitigation of Bullying.

GUIDANCE: Should be evident in policy and practice. Some evidence may already be included in the self-study.

- I. An accredited school must have written policies pertaining to Internet protection for both faculty and students.

GUIDANCE: Review policy on internet usage.

- J. An accredited school must maintain and update annually Emergency Management and Disaster Response Plans. Evidence of a written plan, specifying actions in preparing, responding to, and recovering from school crisis and emergencies. Inclusive of the following items:
- a. Emergency Management and Disaster Response Plans
  - b. Medication Administration Training
  - c. Assessment and Management of Concussions
  - d. Prevention and Mitigation of Bullying

GUIDANCE: Some evidence may already be included in the self-study.

- K. Safe Schools Initiative

GUIDANCE: All schools must have at least one person trained in K-12 threat assessment no later than July 1, 2023, with evidence of the creation and implementation of a school-based threat assessment team (more than one staff member), as well as evidence of training provided to school staff.

- L. Virginia Addendum to accreditation reviews (Amended 10.1.2021)

All VCPE approved accrediting associations must ensure completion of the VCPE Virginia Addendum during all Virginia private school accreditation reviews. All VCPE approved accrediting associations must submit this completed and signed document to the VCPE office within 10 days of the conclusion of the school’s accreditation team visit.



## APPENDIX 5:

# GLOSSARY

- **Grammar** grades: K–6
- **Dialectic** or **Logic** phase, sometimes Logic School: 7–8
- **Rhetoric** phase, sometimes Rhetoric School: 9–12
- **Secondary** refers to 7–12.
- **Recognized** as used with “diploma” refers to the ability of the accredited school to issue diplomas that are recognized by the ACCS. This recognition is similar to that of other program-type specific diplomas, for example, the International Baccalaureate diploma. ACCS schools accredited with certain endorsements (K–8 for example) may not issue recognized diplomas. Generally, all ACCS accredited schools serving grades 9-12 will offer an ACCS Recognized Diploma.
- **Director of Accreditation**, alternately referred to as the Accreditation Director, refers to an executive position within the ACCS empowered to manage the accreditation process on behalf of the ACCS President.
- **Endorsement:** a specified modification to the standard ACCS accreditation status.
- **Graduation Requirement:** every graduate of the school must meet the requirement for the ACCS Authorized Diploma(s) offered by the school. The school may offer “certificates” that do not meet these requirements. “Certificate” means a “Certificate of Completion.”
- **Instruction:** teaching done within a class or curriculum, as a component or as the primary topic of a course. “Instruction in” need not reference a course.
- **Primary and Secondary** when describing schools or education, refers to K–12 education, as opposed to college or pre-school.
- **Required** as it relates to student requirements means that the student in the school continuously (not a transfer), under normal circumstances, is required to take the course.
- **Year** is the equivalent of 120 hours of instruction.