

MANUAL FOR THE RECOGNITION OF ACCREDITING ASSOCIATIONS FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD, ELEMENTARY, & SECONDARY PRIVATE SCHOOLS

**National Council
For
Private School Accreditation**



**Approved by the
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FOREWORD

Accreditation is a unique word in the educational history of the United States since no other nation in this world has so depended on its professional educators and associations to voluntarily establish and monitor their own educational structures, programs, and results—its very quality.

"Accreditation" and "credible" are derived from the same Latin root word, *credo*, which literally refers to a set of established principles or standards. People have historically tested the credibility of educational structures and experiences, which has formed the base for improvements and reform.

Where is education and educational reform headed in the twenty-first century? Perhaps education is headed in the same direction as it was at the turn of the twentieth century, which gave rise to the establishment of the formal constructs of the first regional accrediting associations.

From those original accrediting associations grew many of the standards, procedures, and structures for education in the United States. Despite the criticism being made against accreditation and accrediting associations today, there is resurgence of these concepts among schools in the private sector which has given rise to the development of accrediting agencies for private preschools, elementary, and secondary schools. Some of the standards have changed; some of the expectations have changed; but much of the structure and certainly the original concept and purpose of accreditation has remained.

Regarding the private school sector, accreditation must be responsive to the underlying philosophy that these individuals not only have the right to choose their educational pathway, but that the pathway may uniquely reflect their own convictions.

Socialism is built on uniformity; democracy is built on diversity. Governmental systems that tolerate or encourage diversity will also benefit from the strength and entrepreneurial spirit that allow everybody not only the choice but the opportunity to follow their convictions and pursue individual excellence.

Governmental attitudes toward private school education in this country have taken a variety of expressions from state to state—from exemption of private schools to basic filing or monitoring requirements to varying degrees of state supervision or control. In 1984, the National Association of State Board of Education, with funding from the U.S. Department of Education, studied the

situation and issued a report entitled *Public and Nonpublic School Relationships: Lighthouse Approaches for State Policymakers*. This study examined four of the more favorable relationships between state governments and private schools within their jurisdiction and sought to showcase positive measures to support and encourage quality, credible private school education. This was accomplished with the cooperation of National Conference of State Legislatures, Education Commission of the States, American Association of Christian Schools, Association of Christian Schools International and CAPE.

Early in the history of the United States, private schools constituted a majority of the schools. The U.S. Department of Education currently reports that over 5.4 million children in our country attend private schools at the elementary and secondary levels. The people of the United States owe a debt of gratitude to the variety of educational opportunities provided by the private schools, but, more than that, private schools today must continue to be encouraged in their growth and development. The rise of the private school accrediting associations has reemphasized that point, and the National Council for Private School Accreditation and Regional Accrediting Agencies are further confirmation that the credible private school in the United States has every right and need to exist and to receive the full benefits of national recognition.

A national organization is needed to promote and support the private school movement in this country. The National Council for Private School Accreditation is established to recognize the accrediting associations representing the private preschool, elementary, and secondary schools in the United States and to encourage the unique commitment these schools share for excellence amidst their diversity. NCPSA provides an avenue for national recognition of those accrediting associations seeking to advance quality private school education.

Who can benefit from national recognition?

- Private school accrediting associations that are NATIONAL in their service perspective. These associations most often exist because of unifying philosophical or religious convictions shared by member schools nationwide.
- Accrediting agencies that are MULTI-STATE organizations that have developed from the merging of various state associations of like purpose or constituencies.
- STATEWIDE accrediting associations that have developed as a result of the pressures and needs of their individual states.

- Accrediting associations that have formed a CONSORTIUM or "UMBRELLA" ORGANIZATION at the state level that serves a broad spectrum of accrediting agencies.

With consortia of accrediting agencies, two basic state models have developed. The first are those consortia initiated by the private school accrediting associations themselves that now are formally recognized by government-controlled state departments of education; the second model consists of those groups or agencies initiated by various state departments of education for private school accrediting associations to be able to assure legislators and others that comparability of standards exists between the public and private schools.

At the state level, several models have already emerged—Florida and Texas to name but two. The Florida private school accrediting associations have a long history of this type of recognition in their state. These associations have developed an image of educational excellence both in representation and in the quality of Florida private schools.

Texas has developed a state governmental recognized consortium of a number of private school accrediting associations. This provides an alternative to direct governmental regulation and state department of education control by voluntarily providing an organization that attests to the credibility and performance of private schools in that state. This organization is recognized by the Texas State Department of Education and the state government.

Just as the concept of accreditation in the United States is unique in the world, so likewise is the decentralized, legal, and constitutional control of education. Constitutionally, powers not given to the central government were reserved to the state—educational control being one of those powers. Yet through the years, state control of education has diminished as national priorities, structures, and finances have shaped the state's responses to public and private schools.

Educational systems and policies in the United States are continuing to be shaped today by national pressures including those from the federal government. This national or federal pressure may not soon go away, if ever. Private schools and the accrediting associations that represent them are not immune to either state or national pressures, let alone local ones. Just as there developed a need for an accrediting association for a particular type of private school at the state level, so now there has developed a need for a consortium, and organization, at the national level to recognize those same, unique accrediting associations of private schools.

The National Council for Private School Accreditation will be recognized as a *credible* organization because of its commitment and adherence to a set of standards that represent the best of the collective standards observed in schools of excellence across the United States.

Although an individual accrediting association will benefit from membership in this national consortium, so also will the unique publics served by each of these accrediting groups. Other groups expected to reap benefits from NCPSA will be state legislatures, state departments of education, the federal government, the business and corporate community, foundations, and, in a broader sense, all the people in the United States.

Some of the potential benefits of recognition and membership in the National Council for Private School Accreditation to a private accrediting association, whether national, multi-state, state-based, or a state consortium, are:

- National recognition and broad acceptance
- Collective strength and influence
- Strengthening and improvement of private education
- Accountability to unique and general publics
- Validating credibility of the association
- Facilitating eligibility for corporate matching-gift programs
- Recognition by foundation, governmental, and quasi-governmental agencies
- Articulation agreements for transferability of academic credits
- Development of state and interstate recognition and acceptance
- Providing a forum for professional interaction and mutual assistance in strengthening individual associations

Each accrediting association will value and benefit from this list in varying degrees, but this observation is certain—the forces shaping public education today are shaping and will continue to shape private education as well. We can either wait to be acted upon or we can act.

Regardless of the specific motivations and rationale shaping individual private school accrediting associations, regardless of the governmental pressures and imperatives that vary from state to state, there remains a need for the establishment of a national consortium of accrediting associations dedicated to the distinctives of the private school sector and based on external standards of excellence and credibility as fulfilled by *voluntary peer recognition*—which we know as ***accreditation***.

HISTORY OF NCPSA

In 1985 several private school organizations which accredited their member schools worked with the U. S. Department of Education's Office of Private Education in seeking Federal recognition of their accreditation programs. However, the Department's General Counsel ruled there was no statutory authority for the Department to recognize any elementary-secondary accrediting agencies—including regional associations such as the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, etc.

As a result of General Counsel's memo, efforts to obtain recognition of private school accreditation programs ceased.

The concept resurfaced in the Spring of 1992, when the same private school organizations began exploring the possibility of developing a national entity (not Federal) which would essentially serve as an "accrediting association of private school accrediting agencies.

Dr. Gilbert L. Plubell (North American Division, Seventh Day Adventists Schools) and Dr. Charles J. O'Malley, former Executive Assistant for Private Education, U. S. Department of Education, formed a "working group," which included leaders representing the diversity of private education. The "working group" included:

- Dr. Paul Kienel—Association of Christian Schools International
- Mr. Thomas Reed—Independent School Association of the Central States
- Ms. Sheri Haan—Christian Schools International
- Dr. Carl Moser—Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod
- Dr. David B. Hand—International Christian Accrediting Association
- Mr. David Derrick—Mississippi Private School Association
- Dr. Michael McCarron—Florida Catholic Conference
- Dr. Howard Burke—Florida Association of Christian Colleges and Schools

Other organizations, e.g., the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America, Assemblies of God, National Christian School Association, National Society of Hebrew Day Schools, the National Independent Private Schools Association, and the Association of Independent Schools of Florida expressed interest in nationally recognized self- accreditation program.

In September 1993, these organizations agreed to formalize the process and established the National Council for Private School Accreditation (NCPSA). Twelve associations now hold full membership status in the Council. And, in order to assure that NCPSA recognition remains credible, highly respected educators

such as former U. S. Secretary of Education Terrel Bell, Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools Elementary School Commissioner John Stoops, Independent Schools Association of the Central States President Emeritus Tom Read, and Connecticut Department of Education Private School Approval Consultant Marie Della Bella were asked to serve on the Council as at-large or "public" representatives.

Concurrently, a task force under the leadership of Dr. Don Petry and Dr. David Hand (International Christian Accrediting Association) was established to develop NCPSA's charter, by-laws, and operating manual through which applicant organizations would undergo a peer review process.

In September 1994, six private school accrediting associations became the first fully recognized members of the NCPSA. They were:

- Association of Christian Schools International
- Association of Independent Schools of Florida
- Florida Association of Christian Colleges and Schools
- Florida Catholic Conference
- General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist Schools
- International Christian Accrediting Association

As of March 1, 1997, the following twelve private school accrediting associations have been approved for full membership status by the National Council for Private School Accreditation:

- Accrediting Association of Seventh-day Adventist Schools, Colleges, and Universities (1994)
- Association of Christian Schools International (1994)
- Association of Independent Schools of Florida (1994)
- Christian Schools of Florida (1994)
- Florida Association of Christian Colleges and Schools (1994)
- Florida Catholic Conference (1994)
- Florida Kindergarten Council (1994)
- International Christian Accrediting Association (1994)
- Kentucky Nonpublic School Commission (1994)
- National Christian School Association (1996)
- National Independent Private Schools Association (1994)
- National Lutheran School Accreditation (1996)

INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE

In 1993, a group of educators and organizations, concerned about the role and recognition of private school accreditation efforts in the United States, established the National Council for Private School Accreditation.

The National Council for Private School Accreditation seeks to fulfill the following purposes:

- 1) To encourage the accreditation process as an organizational witness of credibility for the early childhood, elementary, and secondary, private school sector, as characterized by voluntary peer recognition based on accepted and published standards of excellence;
- 2) To provide national leadership and communication for private school accreditation through the recognition and voluntary association of credible and responsible private school accrediting associations;
- 3) To recognize, encourage, and improve the quality and diversity of private early childhood, elementary, and secondary education including, but not necessarily limited to the development of educational and research activities, services, and opportunities related to accreditation;
- 4) To engage freely in all lawful activities and efforts, including the solicitation of grants and contributions that may reasonably be intended or expected to promote and advance these goals; and
- 5) To carry on any other business related to the foregoing purposes and to have and exercise all the powers conferred by the laws of the District of Columbia upon corporations formed under the District of Columbia Non-Profit Corporation Act.

RATIONALE

The National Council for Private School Accreditation is dedicated to the accreditation process as a viable and responsible means of establishing a witness of school excellence. NCPSA is committed to accreditation based on the concept of voluntary peer recognition; that is, the principle that institutions sharing common purposes and distinctives are better able to assist one another in achieving the standards for academic excellence and responsiveness to their respective publics and the nation.

The National Council for Private School Accreditation seeks to promote and support independent and autonomous accrediting associations serving private early childhood, elementary, and secondary schools which are committed to quality educational programs.

ACCREDITATION IMPERATIVES

NCPSA recognizes that a valid and responsible accreditation process will contain the following elements for both the national organization as well as its member accrediting associations.

Standards. To effect and validate academic and professional quality, an accrediting association must establish and publish minimum standards. These standards are to be readily understood by its clientele and sufficient to determine school effectiveness based on sound educational practices. NCPSA recognizes and supports the right of individual accrediting associations to establish their own standards of comparability in support of their distinctive purposes and priorities in their accreditation of private preschool, elementary, and secondary schools.

Each accrediting association within NCPSA will have established and implemented accreditation standards, consistent with its educational mission and philosophy, as it deems appropriate and effective for its membership. Standards are to promote quality, stability of operations, financial responsibility, reputable and ethical behavior, and overall professionalism. These standards should not be arbitrary, but should be based on valid and reliable indicators of educational excellence. As much as possible, standards should be educative as well as evaluative—directing schools in a process of development and attainment.

Accrediting associations may establish standards, criteria, or eligibility requirements that not only address educational quality, but help define the nature of their constituency; (e.g., religious conviction, educational philosophy, student populations served, etc.). Such requirements are to be presented to all current and prospective member schools prior to involvement in the accreditation process.

Every effort should be made to respect and retain the autonomy of individual member schools. Standards should not unnecessarily alter the essential character of a school. Standards should be used to educate and evaluate, but not to control, member schools. Standards should also attempt to accommodate an appropriate amount of variations and diversity among the membership within the mission and character established by the accrediting association.

Provision for peer involvement in the development, implementation, use, and ongoing review of standards should be included to assure the appropriateness of standards and their responsiveness to the nature and needs of member schools.

Self-Study. Accreditation is not static; opportunity for a school to learn and grow and develop toward excellence must be included. Integral to the accreditation process is the opportunity for a school to engage in a self-study process; whereby it may assess its own effectiveness based on the established standards and guidelines, make necessary improvements, and report its results. Accreditation will contain a self-study element and incorporate this element in its review and recognition process of each school before the site visit is conducted.

During the self-study component, the school should study all standards and requirements, conduct self-evaluations, train personnel, and make necessary changes and adjustments. Accrediting associations may choose to recognize this process as a status level towards accreditation; however, final recognition of accreditation should be deferred until after the site visit, review, and formal approval are conducted.

A minimum of one year should be allocated to the school self-study. Evidence of the self-study (e.g., submission of reports or exhibits) will be required to verify that appropriate activities have been conducted.

It is essential that assistance be made available to schools during the self-study process. This assistance may include publications, seminars and workshops, access to accreditation personnel, etc.

Site Visit. On-site visitation is critical to the objective validation of school effectiveness and should be a required phase of the accreditation process. It must precede any decisions regarding the awarding of final accreditation status. A site visit serves three functions: (1) to verify that all materials submitted by the school are accurate, (2) to validate, by on-site inspection, the results of the self-study, and (3) to allow qualified professionals to make recommendations for the overall improvement of the school. The results of the site visit will serve as a key element in the formal review and recognition process of the school.

Evaluation is to be conducted by persons with no vested interest in the school, familiar in the accreditation standards and procedures, and knowledgeable of sound educational practices. Qualified and impartial persons with educational and accreditation expertise must be available to serve on site visits. It is recommended that some of these persons be representatives of the accrediting association and/or peer institutions that are current members.

Teams involved in site visits are to limit their activities to gathering information and making recommendations. Formal reports of these visits are to be forwarded for final review and should be a key element in the approval process. Opportunities for schools to review and comment on these reports will be provided and an appeal system in place to handle any complaints and grievances that may occur.

Publication. In order to be credible and responsive to various and appropriate publics, the accrediting association must publish its standards and procedures and make them available for prospective applicants as well as its defined publics.

Accrediting associations will also maintain current membership lists, updated at least annually, containing all members and status levels. Some degree of confidentiality may be maintained regarding internal disciplinary action against member schools; however, removal from membership and/or loss of accreditation status should be reported promptly. Appropriate publics should have access to the membership list and this listing will serve as a key document in materials submitted to NCPA.

In order to maintain the integrity of its own accreditation program and reporting strategies, the accrediting association must take such action as necessary and prudent in providing guidelines and directives to individual schools in the reporting of their membership and status levels. Any misrepresentation should be promptly addressed by the accrediting association with appropriate disciplinary action or other corrective measures taken.

Reevaluation. Accreditation is both a result and a process. Reevaluation is essential to insure that members are maintaining the level of quality present at their initial recognition. To do so, the accreditation process will provide for the periodic reevaluation of members.

Annual reports will be required of accrediting associations and schools at the highest level of accreditation and/or recognition to assure that standards and other requirements are being fulfilled on a continual basis. Annual reports will, at a minimum, require information in two essential areas: (1) statistical and demographic information and (2) any substantive change that may have occurred. Some degree of annual review should also be conducted to follow up on the annual reports submitted. It is highly recommended that an annual review of all schools involved in the accreditation process, regardless of accreditation status, be conducted.

Accrediting associations will also require that all schools at the highest level of accreditation participate in a reevaluation process containing the elements of self- study, site visit, and final review. An abbreviated version may be used; however, site visits will be conducted at reasonable intervals to assure that schools continue to fulfill all required standards.

Accrediting associations should make appropriate notation of schools that participate in the reevaluation process. Likewise, those schools failing to maintain accreditation requirements should also be so noted and appropriate corrective measures or disciplinary action taken.

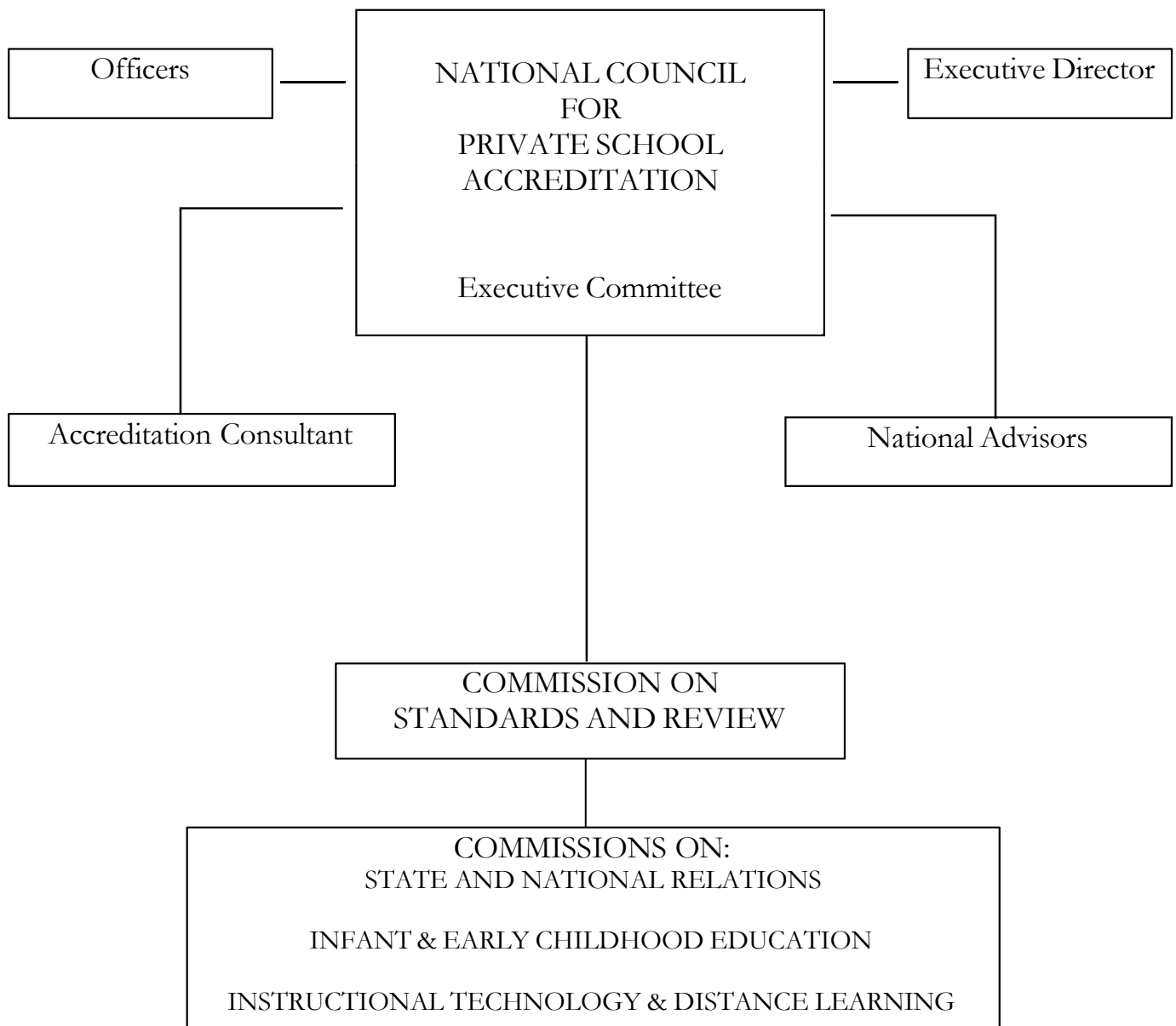
Many prominent educators have concurred with the desirability of what NCPSA is attempting to accomplish. The following quote is from Dr. Terrel Bell, former Secretary of the United States Department of Education.

"When Chuck O'Malley explained what your original 'working group' envisioned over two years ago, I felt you were on the right track. The concept of 'self-policing' of private and church-related schools—working in concert with other agencies—was one that I had supported for many years. Some of you may be aware that I, as Secretary of Education, had endorsed Chuck's proposal that the Department of Education accept private school accreditation as a criterion for recommending approval to private schools seeking eligibility to enroll alien, nonresident students. I also concurred with the recommendations for self- policing emanating from the National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE) report, 'PUBLIC AND NONPUBLIC SCHOOL RELATIONSHIPS: Lighthouse Approaches For State Policymakers.'

"I am pleased to be part of this unique effort. I believe what you are doing will assist us greatly in improving schools and in developing a more cooperative relationship between public and private education."—Terrel Bell

NCPSA ORGANIZATION AND GENERAL POLICIES

The basic administrative bodies within NCPSA are the National Council, its Executive Committee, the Commission on Standards and Review, and the National Advisors. Refer to the chart below regarding their relationship within NCPSA.



ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

NATIONAL COUNCIL

■ ***Membership***

(established by NCPSA Bylaws in Article IV, Section 2)

- One representative and one alternate from each member accrediting association. Official representatives will be vested with full voting power. Alternates will have no voting power except in the absence or inability of the official representative of his or her accrediting association.
- Public representatives (the number may not exceed 25% of total representatives on the National Council, including public representatives). Priority will be given to elect at least one public representative from a state educational association and at least one public representative from a regional accrediting association.
- Executive Director and other ex officio regular attendees (all nonvoting) as appointed by the National Council (e.g., consultant, recording secretary, legal counsel, advisors, etc.).

■ ***Meetings***

- At least twice a year and more often as needed.
- One meeting to be established as the annual meeting for the purposes of elections, appointments, approving budgets, approving programs, and establishment of committees and commissions.

■ ***Areas of Responsibility***

- Supervision of the application, review, and recognition processes within NCPSA.
- Recognition or removal of membership; designation of status levels and disciplinary action; final authority on complaints and appeals.
- Approval and interpretation of Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws, accreditation standards and procedures, NCPSA policies, and other official NCPSA statements and directives.

NATIONAL COUNCIL, continued

- Administration and legal operations of NCPSA.
- Establishment and continuance of NCPSA programs and services; approval of all official NCPSA studies and investigations.
- Approval, authorization, and removal of NCPSA officers, commissioners, advisors, the Executive Director, and other NCPSA representatives, or personnel as specified.
- Communication and interaction with defined publics; monitoring of national and international policies and attitudes regarding private school education.
- Final legal authority of NCPSA.

■ *Accountability*

- To those accrediting associations within its membership.
- To the specific constituencies represented by its membership.
- To those in the general public supporting the diversity of education and entrepreneurial opportunities through private schools.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

■ ***Membership***

(established by NCPA Bylaws in Article VI, Section 1)

- Chair of the National Council
- Vice Chair of the National Council
- Secretary of the National Council
- Treasurer of the National Council
- One public representative from the National Council (to be elected to a two- year term)
- Ex officio, nonvoting members to include:
 - Executive Director
 - Immediate past Chair of the National Council
 - Accreditation Consultant
 - Others as may be appointed by the National Council

■ ***Meetings***

- Twice a year preceding the National Council meeting and more often as needed

■ ***Areas of Responsibility***

- To review and make recommendations to the National Council (but no binding decisions) in the following areas:
 - Changes to the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws; NCPA accreditation standards, procedures, policies, or other authorized directives
 - General operating policies and procedures internal to NCPA
 - Annual budget and establishment of membership fees and charges
 - The employment, continuance, and termination of the Executive Director

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, continued

— To act on behalf of the National Council when it is not in session and as may be specifically directed in the following:

- Implementation of the approved budget; implementation of general operating policies and procedures
- Annual evaluations of the Executive Director; staff employment decisions other than the Executive Director (unless otherwise specified)
- Participation in developing agendas for meetings of the National Council; any other required reports, studies, or investigations as directed by the National Council
- Issues requiring immediate attention or legal action of NCPSA (within the specifications of the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws); any other responsibilities as may be designated by the National Council

— Does NOT have authority (other than recommending powers) regarding:

- Membership decisions: acceptance or denial of applications for membership, recognition or removal of membership, designation of status levels or disciplinary action
- Changes to the Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws, or established NCPSA accreditation standards, procedures, policies, or other official directives
- Disposition or alienation of property or major assets of NCPSA
- Hiring or termination of Executive Director
- Changes in any previous decisions of the National Council; changes or limitations to official representatives duly selected to or by the National Council
- Any other matters specified by the National Council or as may be contained in the Articles of Incorporation or Bylaws

■ ***Accountability***

— To the National Council

COMMISSION ON STANDARDS AND REVIEW

■ ***Membership***

(established by NCPSA Bylaws in Article IX, Section 1)

- Chair, Vice Chair, and Executive Director of the National Council (ex officio, nonvoting members)
- At least nine voting Commissioners elected by the National Council
 - Seven Commissioners representing member associations (need not be the same representatives as on the National Council)
 - Two public representatives (need not be the same representatives as on the National Council)
 - Term of membership (3 years)
 - Initial representatives elected to one-, two-, and three-year terms establishing a rotation pattern; subsequent representatives will serve the full three-year term

■ ***Meetings***

- Twice a year preceding the meeting of the National Council or more often as needed

■ ***Areas of Responsibility***

- Provides expertise and assistance in site visits, investigations, evaluations, and the preparation of documentation and reports by accrediting associations
- Serves as a review and recommending body in the following areas:
 - Recommendations to the National Council regarding accrediting associations participating in the preliminary review, review, or recognition processes
 - Recommendations to the National Council regarding member associations participating in the annual review or reevaluation
 - NCPSA accreditation standards, procedures, and policies as may be directed by the National Council
 - Any other investigations, visits, evaluations, inquiries, or special studies as directed by the National Council

■ ***Accountability***

- To the National Council

NATIONAL ADVISORS

■ ***Membership***

- Appointed by the National Council
- Nominations made by the Executive Committee to the National Council for ratification
- A maximum of fifteen Advisors (nonvoting)
- Term of membership will be 2 years (rotating terms)

■ ***Meetings***

- Once a year preceding the annual meeting of the National Council
- Other meetings of the National Council

■ ***Responsibilities and Authority***

- To provide informed advice to the National Council on such issues as requested or discussed
- To make contact with other private school membership organizations, governmental agencies, and private agencies as directed by the National Council
- To advise in areas related to private business, corporations, foundations, and other accrediting agencies
- To conduct studies and issue reports on areas that will strengthen the purposes, priorities, and overall goals of NCPSA

■ ***Accountability***

- To the National Council

GENERAL POLICY STATEMENTS

1. ***Financial and budgeting considerations***

- Only the Executive Director and staff are eligible for expense reimbursement with the following exceptions:
 - a) When the Executive Committee is called at a time other than the twice a year meetings (limit of two such additional meetings per year for travel and necessary expense reimbursement)
 - b) When the National Council authorizes additional reimbursement for special meetings of commissions or committees.
- All National Council representatives, as well as elected members to the Commission on Standards and Review and the National Advisors, will serve without reimbursement from the national organization unless the National Council appropriates and authorizes the expense reimbursement. Public representatives may be reimbursed for travel and related expenses.

2. ***Fees***

- The initial *application fee* is established at \$1500, payable with the submission of the application and required before further action may be taken by NCPSA.
 - a) The fifteen charter members of NCPSA are exempted from the application fee since they have participated in funding the organization's start-up costs.
 - b) An accrediting association that has paid the application fee may receive a refund of \$500 if the association is not initially accepted into the NCPSA recognition process.
- NCPSA will establish an *annual fee* to be required of all accrediting associations participating in the recognition process.
 - a) Once an accrediting association has been accepted as a NCPSA member, the annual fee will be assessed in full.

- b) Pro rata, discounts, or refunds of the annual fee will not be available. Accrediting associations entering or withdrawing from NCPSA during the year will be assessed the annual fee for a full year regardless of the calendar date.
- 3. The National Council will seek to obtain a balance or representation of members on all commissions and committees, but especially with the Commission on Standards and Review.
- 4. The National Council on Private School Accreditation will establish and maintain five essential imperatives for the recognizing of accrediting associations which they will include as a part of the accreditation process.
 - a) Standards
 - b) Self-Study
 - c) Site Visit
 - d) Publication
 - e) Reevaluation
- 5. An official representative or alternate representing a member accrediting association of NCPSA is appointed to serve on the National Council by the member association he or she represents; however, membership on the Commission on Standards and Review is elected by the National Council. Member accrediting associations may submit names and credentials for nomination to this group.

Representatives on the National Council may serve on any or all of the subgroups of the organization as well as other representatives of member accrediting associations.

No member will have more than one voting representative on each commission or committee.

Public representatives serving on the National Council or any of its committees must not be affiliated with any of the member accrediting associations and must not otherwise be viewed by the National Council as having a "conflict of interest."

- 6. Since the National Council on Private School Accreditation represents a diversity of organizations, it will refrain from endorsing, affiliating, or establishing membership with any other groups, causes, or political parties.

7. The purpose of the National Council on Private School Accreditation is to recognize legally constituted accrediting associations with private early childhood, elementary, and/or secondary member schools.
8. Accrediting associations that exclusively represent public schools, day care centers, foreign-based schools, or postsecondary/adult level institutions are not eligible for membership.
9. Foreign-based accrediting associations are not eligible for membership. (U.S. members may, however, also accredit foreign schools.)
10. Private schools may hold accreditation with more than one recognized school accrediting association.
11. The National Council for Private School Accreditation will publish annually a list of all NCPSA members including, as it deems appropriate, recognition status and other pertinent information.
12. The National Council's first responsibility is to its members and will, therefore, use as its primary criteria the maintenance and support of the individual member's purpose, philosophy, autonomy, organizational structure, operations, and services while meeting minimum standards of excellence and credibility.

NCPSA PROCEDURES

The National Council for Private School Accreditation has established accreditation procedures to facilitate the appropriate application, review, and recognition of qualified and credible accrediting associations serving private schools.

The following procedures are required of accrediting associations desiring to enter and advance to full recognition with NCPSA:

STEP 1. INITIAL APPLICATION TO NCPSA

- a) Application Form and Exhibits
 - 1) Basic Data
 - 2) NCPSA Application Exhibits
 - a. Articles of Incorporation/charter
 - b. Bylaws
 - c. Board of Directors
 - d. Current membership
 - e. Accreditation manual
 - 3) Statement of Intent and Agreement
- b) Payment of Application Fee
- c) Submission to the Executive Director

STEP 2. REVIEW PROCESS

- a) Preliminary Review
- b) Assignment of Commission Coordinator
- c) Self-Study and Exhibits
- d) Site Visits
 - 1) Headquarters
 - 2) Accreditation Review Hearings
 - 3) School Site Visit
- e) Site Visit Report
- f) Association Response
- g) Review and Hearings by the Commission on Standards and Review

STEP 3. RECOGNITION PROCESS

- a) Recommendation by the Commission on Standards and Review
- b) Consideration by the National Council
- c) Voting by the National Council
- d) Status Decisions
 - 1) Member
 - 2) Provisional Member
 - 3) Membership Denied

STEP 1: INITIAL APPLICATION TO NCPSA

Each accrediting association desirous of membership in the National Council for Private School Accreditation is required to make application to the NCPSA office. NCPSA will then send an initial application packet to the prospective applicant.

It should be noted that submission of the completed application form, materials, and fees by an accrediting association does not guarantee membership in the National Council for Private School Accreditation nor does it obligate NCPSA to enter the accrediting association into its recognition process.

- a) ***Application Form and Exhibits.*** The completed application form will contain the following elements:
 - 1) ***Basic Data.*** The accrediting association making application to NCPSA will enter all requested information regarding the nature and scope of its operations, membership, and activities.
 - 2) ***NCPSA Application Exhibits.*** The following documents will be submitted to validate basic eligibility:
 - a) A copy of its current Articles of Incorporation and state charter (and/or letter of approval)
 - b) A copy of its official Bylaws
 - c) Current list of its Board of Directors and their qualifications
 - d) Current membership, by state, of all schools participating in its accreditation process
 - e) Accreditation manual or other publications containing accreditation standards, procedures, and policies
 - 3) ***Statement of Intent and Agreement.*** By signing this statement, the accrediting association officially states its intent to seek membership in NCPSA. Further, some basic responsibilities necessary to participate in the review and recognition process are outlined and formally agreed to by the applying association.
- b) ***Payment of Application Fee.*** An application fee of \$1500 must be included with the application to NCPSA. Payment of the application fee will be required before the application may be forwarded to the Commission on Standards and Review.

- c) ***Submission to the Executive Director.*** The application, supporting documentation, and the application fee will be submitted to the NCPA offices and directed to the attention of the Executive Director.

An initial review is conducted by the Executive Director to verify that procedures have been duly followed, submitted materials are complete, and all required fees have been paid. Provided all materials and fees are in order, the application will then be forwarded to the Commission on Standards and Review. The Executive Director will contact the accrediting association as may be necessary should any additional materials or information be required.

If the accrediting association withdraws its application before or during the review process or is initially denied membership in NCPA, \$500 will be refunded to the accrediting association (unless additional expenses have been incurred).

STEP 2: REVIEW PROCESS

The review process provides an opportunity for the Commission on Standards and Review to receive and review initial application materials, initiate the self-study process, and conduct necessary on-site visits to validate eligibility and determine that the school has fulfilled the published accreditation standards.

The review process serves to build a witness of the accrediting association's quality and credibility by assembling necessary reports and documentation before presentation to the National Council.

- a) ***Preliminary Review.*** The Commission on Standards and Review will review the application and documents that were initially submitted to the Executive Director. The Commission will then validate the Executive Director's decision and proceed with the review process.

Should the Commission determine the accrediting association is ineligible for membership; the association will be so notified. No further action will be taken with the association unless it decides to file an appeal.

- b) ***Assignment of Commission Coordinator.*** The Commission on Standards and Review will assign one of its Commissioners to serve as coordinator for each accrediting association the Commission has determined to be eligible to continue in the review process. The coordinator will advise the applicant in the preparation of its self-study and exhibits and later in site visits to be conducted.

- c) ***Self-Study and Exhibits.*** The coordinator will work with his or her assigned accrediting association regarding the preparation of the Self-Study Report and establish a projected time line for its completion.

The Self-Study Report is to be conducted internally by the accrediting association and will consist of its documentation and responses to each of the standards contained in the NCPSA manual. This activity should serve as a catalyst for self-examination and improvement of the association, and the final report should testify of the current levels of acceptance with each standard listed.

The Self-Study Report should be submitted to the coordinator before the Site Visits are to be scheduled, providing the opportunity for the coordinator to obtain necessary background information. The completed Self-Study Report will be reviewed by the assigned coordinator who will establish a date(s) for the site visit of the accrediting association in order to validate the materials contained in the Self-Study Report.

- d) ***Site Visits.*** The purposes of Site Visits to an applicant accrediting association are (1) to validate all information submitted in the application and the Self-Study Report and (2) to make appropriate recommendations regarding the association's fulfillment of NCPSA standards.

The Site Visit will be conducted by professional educators knowledgeable in the field of private school accreditation and in the standards and procedures of NCPSA. Site Visit representatives will be impartial and have no professional ties or interests in the accrediting association being reviewed. The representatives will not receive remuneration for their participation in the Site Visit, but will be reimbursed by the accrediting association for the expenses of travel, lodging, and meals.

NCPSA may require three different types of Site Visits per applicant accrediting association.

- 1) ***Headquarters.*** All applicant associations must participate in a Site Visit of their headquarters facility. The NCPSA representative on the Site Visit will be granted appropriate access to facilities, files, records, and personnel. Generally, a site visit of the headquarters facility may be accomplished in one day.
- 2) ***Accreditation Review Hearings.*** Applicants must also participate in a Site Visit of its accreditation review hearings during which accreditation decisions of member schools are made. The NCPSA representative will

be present to validate the effectiveness and professionalism of the accreditation process. This visit may or may not be combined with the Site Visit of the headquarters school as appropriate.

- 3) *School Site Visit.* As directed by the Commission, a Site Visit to one of the schools participating in the accreditation process of the applicant association may be conducted. This Site Visit will be announced to both the accrediting association and the school and may be directed to specific accreditation activities.

- e) ***Site Visit Report.*** A written report from the Site Visit representative will be sent to the association with a copy forwarded to the Chairman of the Commission on Standards and Review.

The Site Visit report(s), along with the Self-Study Report and other pertinent materials, will be reviewed by the Commission on Standards and Review during its formal review hearings. Any association responses will also be reviewed and any appeal of the Site Visit findings will be considered at that time. After appropriate study and discussion, the Commission will prepare its recommendation to be presented to the National Council during its annual meeting.

- f) ***Association Response.*** Accrediting associations may submit a written response to the Site Visit Report, the review of its Self-Study documents, or other comments by NCPSA or its representatives. Any association responses should be received in sufficient time to be forwarded to the Commission on Standards and Review for its initial review.

The response of the accrediting association must address the specific issues mentioned in the Site Visit Report or other reports or comments from NCPSA or its representatives. The response will indicate what actions were taken to correct the discrepancies and/or to request an appeal of any recommendations made.

- g) ***Review and Hearings by the Commission on Standards and Review.*** The Commission on Standards and Review will convene prior to the meeting of the National Council when accrediting associations in the review process will be considered for recognition. The Commission will review application materials, Self-Study Report, Site Visit Report, and any other pertinent information of each accrediting association being considered.

An accrediting association being reviewed for membership by the Commission must have a representative in attendance during the Commission hearings to answer questions or concerns that the Commission

may have. Failure to have an official representative available during these hearings may jeopardize the outcome of the hearings.

Once the Commission hearings are concluded, the Commission will present its recommendations to the National Council which will vote on official recognition. The Commission has three options for its recommendations: (1) Membership, (2) Provisional Membership, and (3) Membership Denied.

STEP 3: RECOGNITION PROCESS

The recognition process serves as an external witness and validation of the mission and quality of the accrediting associations that become members of NCPSA. The process is conducted by the National Council (during its annual meeting or other regularly scheduled meeting) with representatives from peer accrediting associations participating in the review and final vote regarding NCPSA membership.

All accrediting associations being presented for recognition by the National Council are required to send an official representative to be in attendance.

- a) ***Recommendation by the Commission on Standards and Review.*** The recommendation of the Commission on Standards and Review concerning each applicant is presented to the National Council. This recommendation, along with any pertinent information, will be considered during the meetings of the National Council.
- b) ***Consideration by the National Council.*** Once the National Council has received the recommendations of the Commission on Standards and Review, the floor will be opened for discussion. Those accrediting associations being recommended for either Provisional Membership or Membership Denied will be given the opportunity to make a brief presentation or to formally appeal the recommendation of the Commission on Standards and Review.
- c) ***Voting by the National Council.*** The National Council, consisting of public representatives and representatives of member accrediting associations, will cast their votes regarding the recognition of each of the accrediting associations being presented for membership. The vote of the National Council will be final and cannot be appealed, except to present new information.
- d) ***Status Decisions.*** The National Council has the following options for

accrediting associations being presented for recognition:

- 1) *Member.* The Accrediting association will be fully recognized by NCPSA and granted full privileges of membership. No further action will be required of the association at this time.
- 2) *Provisional Member.* The accrediting association has been determined to have specific deficiencies that prevent full recognition and membership in NCPSA. These deficiencies are to be corrected before recognition can be conferred. The National Council will designate the action required by the accrediting association and may grant limited membership privileges prior to full recognition.

Unless otherwise specified, the Provisional Member will be reviewed at the next meeting of the National Council. Should the Provisional Member fail to make the required corrections by the specified deadline to the satisfaction of the National Council, final membership may be denied.

- 3) *Membership Denied.* The National Council has decided to withhold recognition, and the accrediting association will be dropped from the NCPSA review and recognition process.

Should the accrediting association desire to reenter the NCPSA review and recognition process, it will be required to wait one (1) full year before it may resubmit an application and initiate the review process.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF MEMBERSHIP

In support of its commitment to excellence and integrity, NCPSA requires all current members to accomplish specified responsibilities of membership in order to demonstrate ongoing fulfillment of NCPSA standards and procedures. Failure of a NCPSA member to maintain these responsibilities may result in disciplinary action or revoking of membership.

Annual Fees. Annual fees will be assessed of each NCPSA member accrediting association. The amount of the annual fees will be subject to approval by the National Council.

Each NCPSA member will be required to submit the annual fee to the NCPSA office by the specified deadline. Failure to submit the annual fee by the required deadline may result in the issuance of penalties or could place continued membership in NCPSA at risk.

Annual Report. Each NCPSA member accrediting association will complete an annual report. The annual report completed by the accrediting association will attest to its ongoing fulfillment of NCPSA standards and requirements. The report will focus on two areas: (1) providing necessary statistical and demographic information, and (2) reporting any substantive change from the previous year. The report must be completed in its entirety and submitted to the NCPSA office by the specified deadline.

The annual report will be reviewed by the Executive Director for completeness and forwarded to the Commission on Standards and Review for its recommendation, and then to the National Council. The National Council will receive annual reports, along with Commission recommendations, and will render a decision regarding the status of each member for the upcoming year.

Reevaluation. An accrediting association officially begins membership in NCPSA effective the date when recognition and membership status is voted by the National Council. Membership normally terminates on the date of the annual meeting of the expiration year.

Prior to its expiration date, an accrediting association is required to renew its NCPSA membership by successful participation in the reevaluation process, culminating with the affirmative vote of the National Council to extend its membership for an additional period of time.

Reevaluation is conducted during the fifth year of membership, and the member association has only that year to complete the process. Failure to participate in or complete the reevaluation process prior to the annual meeting of the fifth year will result in membership being automatically revoked for that accrediting association.

Member associations are responsible for initiating the reevaluation process after the annual meeting of their fourth year. Fulfillment of NCPSA standards and procedures currently in force during the year of reevaluation will be required.

The reevaluation process consists of (1) a completed Self-Study, (2) Site Visit(s), and (3) participation in the formal review and recognition process. These elements are conducted in like fashion as for initial applicants (see REVIEW PROCESS; RECOGNITION PROCESS); however, an accelerated time frame may be necessary to insure that all materials are completed in sufficient time for the annual meeting.

During the annual meeting, those members participating in the reevaluation process are presented for review to the Commission on Standards and Review and final vote to the National Council. Representatives on the National Council are ineligible to vote on the extended membership of the member associations they represent; however, they may make a brief presentation on behalf of their accrediting associations.

Status Decisions. The following are status options available to the National Council in the annual review of each member:

- 1) *Member.* The accrediting association will continue in good standing for the upcoming year with no further action required. Full membership privileges will be retained. Member associations participating in reevaluation will have their membership extended for an additional five (5) years, subject to successful participation in the annual review each year.
- 2) *Member with Warning.* The accrediting association will continue as a NCPSA member for the upcoming year and retain full privileges; however, it will be so noted in the member's files that a warning is issued regarding specific deficiencies. The National Council may also stipulate that specific corrective action or other penalty be required of the member placed on warning status.

If this status is issued to a member association participating in reevaluation, any deficiencies and penalties must be addressed or the accrediting association may face imminent revocation of membership.

It should be further noted that a member with warning status is an internal designation and need not be disclosed in public inquiry unless deemed pertinent by NCPSA.

- 3) *Member on Probation.* The accrediting association will continue as a NCPSA member for the upcoming year; however, it will be designated in the member's files that it is on probation and may be disclosed to the public at the discretion of the National Council. The National Council may require corrective or punitive action be taken in response to probation, including the payment of penalty fees or reduction of membership privileges.

Probation will be issued for one year and will be reevaluated at the next annual meeting, or sooner at the discretion of the National Council. Failure to take the necessary action prescribed by the National Council or continued infractions of NCPSA standards and procedures may result in loss of membership.

- 4) *Membership Revoked.* The accrediting association will lose all membership status and privileges in NCPSA and its official representative(s) will vacate positions held on the National Council, the Commission, or any committees of NCPSA when membership is revoked. NCPSA will remove the accrediting association from all current membership listings and may report the revocation of membership to appropriate parties.

Membership may be revoked on the basis of continued and/or serious infractions of NCPSA standards or eligibility requirements, unresponsiveness to NCPSA directives (including failure to submit required reports or fees), or as final disciplinary action for members on probation.

An accrediting association which has had its NCPSA membership revoked may reapply with the approval of the National Council and reenter the recognition process as an applicant. The association may not reapply for NCPSA membership until one (1) full year has elapsed since the National Council vote to revoke its membership.

Participation on National Council. All current member accrediting associations of NCPSA have the right & privilege to have an official representative & alternate serve on the National Council. Each member association is granted one (1) vote on the National Council to be cast by the representative on behalf of the member.

In order to have a National Council that can effectively represent its membership & conduct its required activities, attendance of each official representative is required at each meeting of the Council. Failure to have an official representative in regular attendance at National Council meetings may result in appropriate disciplinary action.

Termination of Membership. Loss of NCPSA membership can only be accomplished in one of two ways: (1) withdrawal or (2) revocation of membership.

Withdrawal of membership is accomplished by letter or other written communication from the accrediting association filed by either the official representative of the association sitting on the National Council or the chief executive officer of the association. Termination of membership will be effective from the date of withdrawal.

NCPSA may revoke membership for a variety of appropriate reasons including nonpayment of required fees and expenses, nonresponsiveness to NCPSA policies or directives, failure to maintain NCPSA standards and requirements, actions that conflict with NCPSA purposes and priorities, etc.

It is also possible that changes may occur in either the accrediting association or in the NCPSA membership; whereby an individual member association is no longer able to function as a peer member (i.e., changes in purposes, priorities, constituencies served, etc.) In such a case, NCPSA reserves the right to revoke membership when it determines it can no longer adequately represent the member or address its unique needs.

Revocation of membership may only be accomplished through official vote of the National Council as established by NCPSA policies & procedures. Termination of membership will be effective at the point which the National Council voted on revocation.

Loss of NCPSA membership will result in the immediate loss of all voting privileges & representation on the National Council & on any other committee, commission, or other group within NCPSA. The accreditation association will also be removed from membership listings, & notification of this removal will be given to all inquiries & may be reported to appropriate agencies & individuals. All

other membership privileges & services extended to the accrediting association will also be terminated.

An accrediting association participating in the recognition process may also withdraw from NCPA or be removed from the NCPA recognition process by official vote of the National Council.

Any accrediting association that has had its NCPA membership revoked or has been removed from the NCPA recognition process by vote of the National Council may reapply to NCPA no sooner than one (1) full year from the date of the National Council vote removing it from NCPA. Regardless of any previous status recognition, the association must enter at the initial application stage and complete all required activities prior to full recognition and membership.

An accrediting association that has withdrawn from NCPA will follow the same requirements, including the requirement to wait at least one (1) full year from the date of the annual meeting of the National Council where its withdrawal was officially received.

Publication of Membership. The National Council for Private School Accreditation will produce an annual list of all member accrediting associations and all accrediting associations participating in its review and recognition process. Inclusion of an accrediting association and its status designation will be current as of the official vote of the National Council as its last meeting.

NCPA member associations (including those who may be at warning or probation status) may publish that they have received full membership and recognition from NCPA. Provisional members must appropriately indicate their provisional status and refrain from making any statements that could imply full NCPA recognition has been conferred or is anticipated.

NOTE: Accrediting associations that have not been presented for review are not officially recognized by NCPA and may not advertise as such. Associations that have filed applications with NCPA must not advertise they have applied to NCPA and will refrain from indicating any official recognition has been received or is anticipated; should the application be denied or returned during the review process, the association will refrain from making statements regarding any relationship to NCPA.

COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS

The National Council for Private School Accreditation supports the principles of fairness and reasonableness in all of its procedures related to the advancement, recognition, and disciplinary action of those accrediting associations participating in its recognition process. NCPSA is willing to receive legitimate complaints and grievances and to take such necessary action as may be prudent and is supportive of its mission and purposes.

An accrediting association with sufficient grounds may make appeal of any official NCPSA recommendation or decision. Appeals may be made on the basis of appropriate implementation of established NCPSA standards, procedures, or other requirements; issues taken against the actual standards, procedures, or other requirements themselves are to be directed to the National Council.

Any person or accrediting association is first advised to contact the person or group with which there may be a problem and try to reach an understanding. This may include filing letters or making presentations as may be appropriate. If an understanding cannot be accomplished, a formal appeal may be lodged with the NCPSA agents as listed below:

Appeal Involving

Appeal Lodged with

Any NCPSA personnel..... Executive Director

Site Visit representative..... Chairman of Commission
on Standards and Review

Initial application Commission on Standards and Review

Commission on Standards
and Review recommendation National Council

National Council..... FINAL DECISION which may
not be appealed unless
new information or
evidence is filed

An accrediting association may continue an appeal up to and including presentation to the National Council. The National Council will render an official ruling on the appeal or may decide not to hear said appeal. Either decision will remain final and may not be further appealed within NCPSA.

Only the National Council or other authorized persons may delay or temporarily suspend NCPSA standards, procedures, or official rulings pending an appeal. Any attempts to use the appeal process to circumvent or delay established NCPSA policies and operations will not be supported.

Complaints or Grievances from Others. NCPSA is not in a position to serve as an arbitrator or appeal agent in complaints or grievances lodged by schools, organizations, or individuals against an NCPSA member association. NCPSA member associations should handle such complaints and grievances internally according to their own established policies and procedures.

This will not necessarily prevent NCPSA from considering complaints and appeals lodged against an accrediting association in its review and recognition process (including the annual review), nor shall it prevent NCPSA from responding in cases when the National Council determines its action is in the best interest of NCPSA or its membership as a whole.

NCPSA STANDARDS FOR THE RECOGNITION OF PRIVATE SCHOOL ACCREDITING ASSOCIATION

The National Council for Private School Accreditation, by mutual consent of its peer membership, establishes standards in various areas that attest to the quality and credibility of private school accreditation. These standards provide direction for internal self-improvement and external review of current and prospective NCPSA members. (Voluntary. Peer Recognition. School Improvement. Assessment. Student Learning.)

In determining initial and ongoing recognition in the NCPSA program, standards are important to serve as indicators of performance and quality. Standards alone may give an incomplete picture of an individual accrediting association since policies and procedures must also be considered. A certain degree of flexibility in the application of standards may be necessary to do justice to many of the diverse, yet effective, private school accrediting associations.

The most important consideration in the evaluation of accrediting associations and the application of these standards shall focus on the inclusion and effectiveness of the five imperatives of a quality accreditation program: (1) standards, (2) self-study, (3) site visits, (4) publications, and (5) continuous evaluation. These five essential elements form the basis for NCPSA recognition and the four major standards that follow (1.0, 2.0, 3.0, and 4.0) serve to support and complete these essential elements.

DIRECTIONS: This section lists the standards used in the recognition of accrediting associations that participate in the initial and ongoing review of the National Council for Private School Accreditation. These standards are divided into four major categories: (1.0) Description of Accrediting Association, (2.0) Accrediting Policies and Procedures of the Association, (3.0) Educational and Associational Effectiveness, and (4.0) Guidelines to be Used by Associations in Accrediting Private Schools.

The first three standard areas address qualities and characteristics of the accrediting association. Only the last section, Guidelines to be Used by Associations in Accrediting Private Schools, address the standards for the individual schools within the accrediting protocol of the association.

Listing of documentation needed is found at the end of each standard area. For the Self-Study, the accrediting association will include the documents and materials requested in their entirety. The association will also prepare a notebook, tabbed for each standard area (e.g., 1.0 DESCRIPTION OF ACCREDITING ASSOCIATION) and each standard (e.g., 1.1 Purpose and Objectives). Entries will be made for each standard with the standard number to be added to each page. For those standards that are fulfilled by citation to the accreditation manual or other publications, the association will include a copy of the appropriate passage in its self-study notebook along with the name of the document and the page number where it is located.

NCPSA STANDARDS FOR THE RECOGNITION OF PRIVATE SCHOOL ACCREDITING ASSOCIATIONS

1.0 DESCRIPTION OF ACCREDITING ASSOCIATION

- 1.1 Purpose and Objectives
- 1.2 Scope of Operations
 - 1.2.1 Geographic Area
 - 1.2.2 Types and Grade Levels of Schools
 - 1.2.3 Description of Accreditation and Pre-accreditation Status
 - 1.2.4 Other Programs and Activities
 - 1.2.5 History
- 1.3 Recognition, Memberships, and Relationships
- 1.4 Public Disclosures and Publications
- 1.5 Personnel
 - 1.5.1 Organization and Administration
 - 1.5.2 Representatives
- 1.6 Financial and Other Resources
 - 1.6.1 Financial Resources
 - 1.6.2 Use of Facilities

2.0 ACCREDITATION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES OF THE ASSOCIATION

- 2.1 Application Process
- 2.2 Functions of Commissions, Committees, etc.
- 2.3 Training and Participation of Members
- 2.4 Self-Study
- 2.5 Site Visit
- 2.6 Review and Accreditation
- 2.7 Appeal and Complaint Procedures
- 2.8 Nondiscrimination Policies
- 2.9 Review of Standards

2.10 Conflicts of Interest

3.0 EDUCATIONAL AND ASSOCIATION EFFECTIVENESS

- 3.1 Effectiveness of Purposes and Objectives
- 3.2 Planning
- 3.3 Accreditation Manual, Materials, and Training
- 3.4 Annual or Periodic Reports
- 3.5 Reevaluation
- 3.6 Documentation and Records
- 3.7 Substantive Change

4.0 GUIDELINES TO BE USED BY ASSOCIATIONS IN ACCREDITING PRIVATE SCHOOLS

- 4.1 Mission and Purpose
 - 4.1.1 Goals
 - 4.1.2 Philosophy
- 4.2 Administrative and Legal Operations
 - 4.2.1 Statement of Nondiscrimination
 - 4.2.2 Organization and Governance
 - 4.2.3 Federal, State, and Local Regulations
 - 4.2.4 Strategic and Master Planning
- 4.3 Fiscal Management and Accountability
 - 4.3.1 Budget
 - 4.3.2 Tuition and Fees; Refund Policy
 - 4.3.3 Reporting and Records
 - 4.3.4 Resource Development
- 4.4 Personnel
 - 4.4.1 Administration
 - 4.4.2 Faculty
 - 4.4.3 Support Staff
 - 4.4.4 Employment Policies and Procedures
 - 4.4.5 Personnel Records

- 4.5 Student Policies and Procedures
 - 4.5.1 Admissions
 - 4.5.2 Supervision and Discipline
 - 4.5.3 Student Safety and Access
 - 4.5.4 Assessment of Performance/Grading
 - 4.5.5 Student Records
- 4.6 Curriculum and Instructional Program
 - 4.6.1 Academic Calendar and Attendance Policies
 - 4.6.2 Description of Programs
 - 4.6.3 Curriculum Materials and Methodology
 - 4.6.4 Program Evaluation, Effectiveness, and Improvement
- 4.7 Facilities and Equipment
 - 4.7.1 Safety and Maintenance of Facilities and Equipment
 - 4.7.2 Instructional Materials and Equipment
 - 4.7.3 Library/Media Center
- 4.8 Student Support Services
- 4.9 Advertising and Publications
 - 4.9.1 Legal and Ethical Guidelines
 - 4.9.2 Statement of Accreditation Status
 - 4.9.3 Institutional Publications, Correspondence, and Materials

NCPA STANDARDS FOR THE RECOGNITION OF PRIVATE SCHOOL ACCREDITING ASSOCIATION

1.0 **DESCRIPTION OF ACCREDITING ASSOCIATION**

The accreditation association will maintain appropriate records for all years of operation including both the records for the accrediting association as well as its member schools. These records will be sufficient to document the history, organizational structure, standards, operations, and procedures of the association.

1.1 ***Purposes and Objectives***

The purposes (beliefs, mission, vision, and goals) and objectives of the accrediting association will support and not contradict the stated purposes of NCPA and be sufficient to establish a quality, professional, private school accreditation program. These purposes and objectives will be well-defined by the accrediting association and appropriately communicated to current and prospective members.

1.2 ***Scope of Operations***

The scope of operations to be examined by NCPA will be directed toward quality accreditation programs and related services for private early education, elementary, and/or secondary schools and consistent with stated NCPA guidelines and documentation. The accrediting association may provide other services or include schools or other organizations beyond this scope; however, their inclusion will not significantly prevent the association from meeting the accreditation needs of the defined scope nor will service to these schools be in conflict with the stated NCPA purposes and imperatives. Key elements of this standard include:

1.2.1 ***Geographic Area***

- a) The accrediting association will maintain an identified headquarters office.
- b) The majority of the current membership will be located and operate primarily within the United States.

1.2.2 *Types and Grade Levels of Schools*

Those schools participating in the accreditation program offered by the accrediting association may include early education through adult education and most often be private.

1.2.3 *Description of Accreditation and Pre-accreditation Status*

The accrediting association appropriately designates those schools which have received and maintain full recognition at the highest accreditation status level offered. Those schools which have not attained full recognition must be clearly and appropriately designated, which may be accomplished by the use of provisional, candidacy, applicant, or other pre-accreditation status terms. The accrediting association will also appropriately record and publish any changes in accreditation or pre-accreditation status, especially in those instances involving a school's change of status (lapse of membership, withdrawn, warned, probation, or dropped.)

1.2.4 *Other Programs and Activities*

The accrediting association will provide a report of other programs, services, and activities offered to its membership.

1.2.5 *History*

The accrediting association will submit a written history of its operations, from its founding date until the current year that attests to its stability, reliability, and commitment. Key elements of this history must include: date of founding and/or incorporation, date when the first school(s) achieved the highest accreditation status awarded, current listing of the number of schools participating in the accreditation program, and other important events (such as recognitions, affiliations, memberships in organizations, key personnel, etc.).

1.3 ***Recognition, Memberships, and Relationships***

The accrediting association may be recognized, affiliated, or hold a membership or other relationship with such agencies, organizations, associations, or other groups that contribute to the fulfillment of its purposes and that do not conflict with NCPSA purposes and imperatives.

The accrediting association may also be involved in recognition or approval by appropriate international, federal, state, or local governmental agencies or departments provided such involvement does not jeopardize its legal status or operations.

NOTE: NCPSA membership or participation in its recognition process does not necessarily imply that NCPSA endorses or approves of any or all organizations, associations, or other groups in which a member accrediting association may be involved.

1.4 ***Public Disclosures and Publications***

The accrediting association will make key information and publications available to the public upon their request. Appropriate information and publications will be made available to the public free or at a fee. As a minimum, the accrediting association will disclose information regarding its participation and status in NCPSA, its accreditation standards and procedures, and current membership and status level of individual schools within the association.

All association publications, correspondence, and other materials should accurately represent the association in a professional and ethical manner. Further, the accrediting association will be required to maintain this high level of ethics and honesty in all communications and material submitted to the association's public(s) and relationships with other associations.

1.5 ***Personnel***

The accrediting association will have access to sufficient personnel within an appropriate and effective organizational structure as necessary to carry out professional operations and consistent with its purposes and providing responsiveness to its various publics.

1.5.1 ***Organization and Administration***

The accrediting association has implemented or functions within an effective organizational structure that legally governs and administers the operations of the association.

Sufficient administrative personnel have been obtained to meet the legal and organizational requirements of the accrediting association.

1.5.2 *Representatives*

The accrediting association has provided the opportunity to include appropriate representation of the constituency or constituencies that it serves to participate and/or provide input into the association.

1.6 *Financial and Other Resources*

The accrediting association will have sufficient financial support and other resources as necessary for its effective operations. Income and expenditures will reflect responsible and ethical financial management.

1.6.1 *Financial Resources*

The accrediting association is able to demonstrate that it has current and projected financial resources for the efficient operation of its accreditation program and all other advertised services. Further, the accrediting association will evidence effective financial management and accounting strategies, implemented with the highest standards of professionalism and integrity. Results of financial audits may be used to contribute to a more complete understanding of the financial management of the association.

1.6.2 *Use of Facilities*

The accrediting association has access to sufficient and appropriate facilities for its operations including administrative and office requirements, storage of necessary records and files, any special program or activity needs, and any required meetings of its membership.

DOCUMENTATION FOR STANDARD AREA 1.0: Submit in electronic form the following documentation and exhibits requested for each of the following standards. Include the standard number and title (e.g., *1.1 Purpose and Objectives*) and place the documents and/or copied exhibits in the appropriate section of the self-study notebook.

- 1.1 The purposes and objectives of the accrediting association as listed in existing publications, official websites, or other materials (include name of publication and page number).
- 1.2
 - a) A written narrative describing the scope of current operations including descriptions of: (1.2.1) geographic area, (1.2.2) types and grade levels of schools, (1.2.3) description of accreditation and pre-accreditation status, (1.2.4) other programs and services, and (1.2.5) history. Include excerpts from current accrediting association publications or other materials whenever possible.
 - b) A current, dated list of all schools participating in its accreditation program(s), by state, including the names of schools, their addresses, and accreditation and pre-accreditation status levels or designations.
- 1.3 A written narrative describing recognition, membership, affiliation, or other relationship with any organizations, associations, or other groups (including any governmental agencies or departments), as may be relevant, and the dates during which those relationships were active. (If there are none, it will be so stated.) Include excerpts from current accrediting association publications or other materials whenever possible.
- 1.4 A statement of the association's written policies and procedures regarding public information and its costs to consumers; sample materials and publications (e.g., brochures, publication statements, sample correspondence, etc.) that demonstrate the application of these policies and procedures.
- 1.5 Submission of the following documents:
 - a) A copy of the current Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws for the accrediting association.

- b) A list of all administrative personnel with their titles and qualifications with an organizational chart of their administrative relationships.
- c) A governance chart along with the names and addresses of all members of its Board of Directors and documentation regarding their qualifications.
- d) The names of any current elected or appointed representatives of its constituency who actively participate in the activities of the accrediting association; the title of office or description of responsibilities for each; the date during which the term of office for each expires. (This may include representation from the membership also.)

1.6 Submission of the following documents:

- a) A financial statement of all income and expense for the last complete fiscal year or a copy of the current financial audit.
- b) An annual budget for the upcoming fiscal year.
- c) A description of facilities available to the accrediting association and their use.

2.0 **ACCREDITATION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES OF THE ASSOCIATION**

The accrediting association has implemented and published accreditation policies and procedures necessary to define its accreditation process and is consistent with the standards and guidelines of NCPSA.

2.1 ***Application Process***

The accrediting association has implemented an application process for prospective member schools that gathers essential information and provides some degree of initial review of eligibility. Those applicants deemed ineligible are promptly notified before more extensive involvement is required.

2.2 ***Functions of Commissions, Committees, etc.***

The accrediting association has established commission(s), committee(s), or panel(s) that review each school seeking recognition. This group or groups will be involved in the inspection of documentation, the results of the self-study, reports of the site visit, and other pertinent information before final decisions are rendered.

2.3 ***Training and Participation of Members***

In support of NCPSA's commitment to voluntary peer recognition, accrediting associations are encouraged to have member schools, especially those at the highest level of accreditation, participate in various phases of the accreditation process. Training opportunities should be made available for these participants, as well as workshops and seminars for overall school development and improvement.

2.4 ***Self-Study***

The accrediting association will establish an institutional self-study within its accreditation process that provides the opportunity for each school to review the accreditation standards, make necessary improvements and adjustments, and report on its results. These results will be a part of the review and recognition process of the school.

2.5 *Site Visit*

The accrediting association will conduct a site visit of each school within its accreditation process. The site visit will verify that all materials submitted by the school are accurate, validate the results of the self-study, and offer input for the overall improvement of the school.

Site visits will be conducted by qualified professional educators, knowledgeable in general accreditation and educational practices pertinent to the peer membership and appropriately trained in the accreditation policies and procedures of the association. Precautions shall be taken in the selection and supervision of site visitors to insure objectivity and impartiality in the review process.

The results of the site visit will serve as a key element in the formal review and recognition process of the school and a site visit will be conducted before full initial accreditation is awarded to any school. The accrediting association will also make on-site visitation a part of its reevaluation process of its fully accredited schools.

2.6 *Review and Accreditation*

The accrediting association has established sound and effective policies and procedures for the review and recognition of schools participating in its accreditation program at pre-accreditation and accreditation status levels. Periodic review may be conducted as needed on all schools participating in the accreditation program, with more detailed review for those schools seeking initial accreditation or reevaluation.

Granting and renewal of accreditation at highest level shall incorporate the results of responsible and professional review based on the consistent and impartial use of established accreditation standards and procedures. Adverse decisions regarding the termination or denial of accreditation will be for appropriate and verifiable reasons.

2.7 *Appeal and Complaint Procedures*

The accrediting association will implement sufficient policies and procedures to address reasonable complaints and inquiries of its membership. The association will also have appeal procedures in place for schools requesting appeals to decisions on granting of pre- accreditation or highest accreditation status levels, removal from membership, disciplinary action, etc. Appropriate policies and procedures will be implemented to address complaints concerning individual member schools from their various constituencies and the general public.

2.8 *Nondiscrimination Policies*

The accrediting association will approve and implement an appropriate statement of nondiscrimination when applicable for all areas of its operation that complies with federal law and regulations.

2.9 *Review of Standards*

The accrediting association will make provision for the periodic review of its accreditation standards with consideration for revision as may be appropriate. Membership and/or those member schools at the highest level of accreditation should be allowed to provide input in the review of accreditation standards.

2.10 *Conflicts of Interest*

The accrediting association will take sufficient precautions to prevent conflicts of interest and insure impartiality in review, recommendation, or definitive rulings regarding membership, removal from membership, issuing of pre-accreditation and accreditation status, disciplinary action, appeals, etc.

DOCUMENTATION FOR STANDARD AREA 2.0: The accrediting association will submit a copy in electronic form of its current accreditation manual in its entirety and, as related to each standard, excerpts from the accreditation manual (or other pertinent materials) within the appropriate sections of the self-study notebook. Include the standard number and title (e.g., 2.1 *Application Process*) for each entry.

- 2.1 A copy of the application form and materials for the accreditation process; a statement describing the policies and procedures relating to the applicant review process.
- 2.2 A written description of commission(s), committee(s), panel(s), etc. involved in the review and accreditation process of the association with the organizational structure and functions; qualifications of members should also be stated.
- 2.3 A description of the participation of member schools in the accreditation process; training requirements and opportunities for these participants.
- 2.4 A copy of the procedures related to the self-study and a description of personnel, with their qualifications, involved in the preparation of the self-study.
- 2.5 A written description of site visit procedures and requirements including the selection and training of site visit personnel.
- 2.6 A description of the accreditation review process (all schools); a statement as to the review and accreditation procedures.
- 2.7 A copy of the appeal and complaint procedures (for member schools and general public).
- 2.8 A copy of the nondiscrimination statement of the association.
- 2.9 A description of the review process for accreditation standards (including participants and their qualifications).
- 2.10 A copy of policies and procedures related to conflict of interest within the association.

3.0 EDUCATIONAL AND ASSOCIATION EFFECTIVENESS

The accrediting association will demonstrate sufficient commitment to establishing a quality recognition and accreditation process that effectively promotes educational programs and institutions that are reputable, responsible, educationally sound, and consistent with the purposes and priorities of NCPSA (student learning, student performance, and continuous school improvement.)

3.1 *Effectiveness of Purposes and Objectives*

The accrediting association will demonstrate that its purposes and objectives (as submitted for Standard 1.1) have been appropriately implemented and provide sufficient direction to its accreditation process and other appropriate programs and services that may have been developed.

3.2 *Strategic and Continuous Planning*

The accrediting association will participate in sufficient strategic planning efforts to support its purposes and objectives and to provide for the effective continuance of the association. Strategic planning will be continuous and involve appropriate leadership of the association. Strategic planning should include key areas of: (1) membership projections, (2) programs and services offered, (3) staffing, (4) finances, (5) facilities, (6) outcomes assessment/evaluation, (7) and other considerations. When applicable, the strategic plan should be presented to the membership for consideration and appropriate action.

3.3 *Accreditation Manual, Materials, and Training*

The accrediting association will demonstrate that it has developed and implemented an effective and appropriate accreditation manual/handbook and other suitable materials and publications necessary to guide its schools through the review and accreditation process. These materials will contain all accreditation standards and appropriate policies and procedures to direct schools in successful participation and continuance in the accrediting association.

3.4 *Training*

The accrediting association will provide sufficient training opportunities for schools and accreditation evaluators participating in its accreditation process, especially in such areas as accreditation

standards, self-study site visits, reevaluation, etc.

3.5 *Annual or Periodic Reports*

The Accrediting association will require all fully accredited institutions to submit annual reports and periodic reports as necessary to obtain current information regarding: (1) statistical and demographic data and (2) substantive change. Appropriate review will be conducted by the association with any necessary follow-up action taken.

It is also highly recommended that a certain degree of review of pre- accredited schools be conducted on an annual basis.

3.6 *Reevaluation*

The accrediting association will require its fully accredited schools to participate in periodic reevaluation in order to continue recognition by the accrediting association. The reevaluation process implemented will include provision for self-study and on-site visitation to validate continued fulfillment of all standards and other requirements. Reevaluation will be required of each fully accredited school at reasonable intervals.

Any accredited school that is unable to demonstrate that it has fully met all standards and requirements of the association must either be removed from full recognition or membership or otherwise designated to indicate that deficiencies exist.

3.7 *Documentation and Records*

The accrediting association will require each school to submit sufficient and appropriate documentation at the time of its initial accreditation to attest to its quality of programs and operations. Documentation will be appropriate to support the review process and necessary to attest the school has met the standards and other requirements of the accrediting association.

The accrediting association will also maintain necessary records of the association and of each school participating in its accreditation process. Files will be kept current, secure, and accessible to all appropriate staff and NCPSA representatives.

3.8 *Substantive Change*

The accrediting association will require all schools participating in its accreditation program to promptly report any substantive change, especially change in name, mailing address, governance, head of school, academic programs offered, or any other area that could impact upon normal school operations. Provision for reporting substantive change will be included in the annual/periodic report filed by accredited schools.

DOCUMENTATION FOR STANDARD AREA 3.0: Submit the following documentation and exhibits requested in electronic form for each of the following standards. Include the standard number and title (e.g., 3.1 *Effectiveness of Purpose and Objectives*) and place the documents and/or copied exhibits in the appropriate section of the self-study notebook. Provide the following:

- 3.1 Written evidence the association's purposes and objectives are being met.
- 3.2 A strategic planning outline for the association for at least three (3) years from the date of submission of the self-study notebook. Current and projected information will be included, by year, for each of the following areas: (1) membership, (2) programs and services offered, (3) staffing, (4) finances (including estimated budgets), (5) facilities, (6) outcome assessment/evaluation, and (7) other considerations.
- 3.3 A copy of the accreditation manual and other appropriate materials along with evidence of the effectiveness of the standards and procedures of the association.
- 3.4 Written statement as to the effectiveness of training programs and the number of participants (including handbooks and samples of any training materials).
- 3.5 A copy of the annual report and any periodic report forms for accredited and pre-accredited schools; policies and procedures related to the implementation and review of annual and periodic reports for accredited and pre-accredited schools.
- 3.6 Policies and procedures related to the reevaluation process for accredited schools within the association.
- 3.7 A list of the required documentation maintained on file by the association for all pre-accredited and accredited schools.
- 3.8 Policies and procedures related to the reporting of substantive change.

4.0 **GUIDELINES TO BE USED BY ASSOCIATIONS IN ACCREDITING PRIVATE SCHOOLS**

The accrediting association will establish official accreditation standards, relative to the following areas, for those schools participating in its accreditation program. Full recognition of any school by the accrediting association will require the school has met all required accreditation standards.

The accrediting association may also require additional standards or requirements that not only address the educational program but further define and specify its constituency.

NOTE: The standards that are listed here should be considered minimal for an accrediting association. The association's standards should be sufficient in scope to attest to each member school's performance and effectiveness. Further, the association's standards should reflect the association's unique mission and purpose while at the same time be comparable to those developed by state agencies and accrediting associations.

4.1 ***Mission and Purpose***

The school will have a mission and/or purpose statement that gives direction for its development.

4.1.1 ***Philosophy***

The school should show evidence in its publications and programs its philosophy of education.

4.1.2 ***Goals***

School-wide or general goals appropriate to a quality educational program should be developed by each school. These goals should reflect both affective and effective outcomes in student performance and continuous school improvement.

4.2 ***Administrative and Legal Operations***

Each school should demonstrate the adequacy of its administrative operations and planning, as well as verify that all necessary legal requirements have been met. The school must operate successfully for a time that is sufficient to demonstrate its educational and operational continuity stability and reliability.

4.2.1 *Statement of Nondiscrimination*

Each school will publish, implement, & display an appropriate statement of nondiscrimination of students & personnel in accordance with federal law & regulations.

4.2.2 *Governance, Administration, and Organization*

The school should describe its governance, administrative, and organizational structure and be able to verify its legal implementation and appropriateness to a quality educational program.

4.2.3 *Federal, State, and Local Regulations*

Each school will be able to verify that it is operating in accordance with applicable federal, state, and local regulations including a current emergency, crisis management plan.

4.2.4 *Strategic and Effective Planning*

Each school will be encouraged in the development of effective and realistic planning strategies that assure continuous school improvement and produce the desired expected student outcomes.

4.3 *Fiscal Management and Accountability*

The accrediting association will establish accreditation standards addressing the areas of fiscal management and accountability for its schools that attest to competent, efficient, and ethical behavior. The following will be addressed: (1) budget; (2) tuition, fees, and refund policy; (3) reporting and records; and (4) resource development. Results of financial audits may be used to contribute to a better understanding of the financial accountability, management, and ethical conduct of a school.

4.3.1 *Budget*

Each school should demonstrate that it has developed an annual budget and budgetary process that is effective and sufficient to continued operations.

4.3.2 *Tuition and Fees; Refund Policy*

Each school should develop and publish a tuition and fee schedule appropriate to its operations and clientele as well as a refund policy that is well communicated and meets legal and ethical considerations.

4.3.3 *Reporting and Records*

The school should implement appropriate policies & procedures regarding financial reporting & maintaining records as necessary to its effective, ethical, & legal operations & be able to evidence that those records are kept in a safe & professional manner.

4.3.4 *Financial/Resource Development*

Schools should be able to document all financial and resource development activities and stipulate that all such activities are to be conducted in a legal, ethical, and professional manner.

4.3.5 *Insurance*

School maintains adequate insurance or equivalent resources to protect financial stability and administrative operations from protracted proceedings and claims for damages.

4.4 *Personnel*

The accrediting association will establish minimum requirements for its schools in the area of staffing, qualifications, & supervision of personnel, including the fulfillment of applicable legal requirements, as necessary to the effective operation of a quality educational program. All administrative & teaching employees of students should have an earned bachelor's degree or meet the legal qualifications of the civil jurisdiction where the school is located. Alternatively, these employees may have appropriate teaching qualifications or a portfolio of educational & professional accomplishments that reveals they are fully qualified to perform the duties assigned to them in the school.

4.4.1 *Administration*

Each school should be able to demonstrate that sufficient, competent, appropriately qualified personnel are administering the school in a professional & effective manner.

4.4.2 *Faculty*

The school should evidence that it has a sufficient number of competent & qualified faculty necessary for the operation of a quality educational program & fulfilled all legal requirements.

4.4.3 *Support Staff*

The school should have sufficient, competent staffing in necessary support areas to assure its safe, efficient, & professional operations. These support areas may include instructional assistance, health, secretarial, clerical, maintenance/custodial, food service, transportation, etc.

4.4.4 *Employment Policies and Procedures*

Each school must operate under such employment policies and procedures as necessary to retain qualified and competent personnel in accordance with established educational practices and legal requirements.

4.4.5 *Personnel Records*

Accurate and complete personnel records will be kept by each school as required by law and as necessary for its effective operations, including professional qualifications and credentials.

4.5 *Student Policies and Procedures*

The accrediting association will require each school to evidence that it has implemented appropriate and effective student policies and procedures sufficient to the operation of a quality instructional program in accordance with accepted educational practices.

4.5.1 *Admissions*

Each school should implement admissions policies and procedures as appropriate to assure sufficient enrollment in accordance with legal, ethical, and professional acceptable practices including the statement of nondiscrimination.

4.5.2 *Supervision and Discipline*

Each school should demonstrate that it has provided adequate and competent supervision of all of its students and that sufficient and appropriate disciplinary policies and procedures are implemented to provide for a safe and positive learning environment.

4.5.3 *Student Safety and Access*

The school should demonstrate that sufficient and appropriate measures are taken to insure the safety and security of its students, including sudden illness and emergency situations. Other areas that should be addressed include access to students, student release, and response to suspected or actual child abuse situations.

4.5.4 *Assessment of Performance/Grading*

Each school should implement appropriate and comprehensive assessment strategies of student performance based on school goals and objectives and in accordance with established and accepted educational practices. Each school should also be able to document appropriate information regarding student performance in its student records.

4.5.5 *Student Records*

Schools should maintain records for students containing information, procedures, and confidentiality as required by law and as necessary for the operation of a quality educational program.

4.6 *Curriculum and Instructional Program*

The accrediting association should require each school to be able to evidence that a quality instructional program has been implemented for its students.

4.6.1 *Academic Calendar and Attendance Policies*

Each school should develop an academic calendar and supporting attendance policies that are sufficient to the operation of a quality instructional program that meets legal requirements.

4.6.2 *Description of Programs*

The accrediting association should specify that its schools submit a description of all instructional programs and make the on-site inspection of programs a requirement to verify this information.

The accrediting association may also make specific program requirements of its member schools based on the school's purposes and goals.

4.6.3 *Curriculum Materials/Methodology and Technology*

Schools should utilize appropriate and effective curriculum materials/methodologies; technology in keeping with their mission; current research; and supportive of their purposes.

4.6.4 *Program Evaluation, Effectiveness, and Improvement*

Each school should be required to demonstrate that it has implemented continuous and systematic evaluation strategies for all areas of its instructional program.

These strategies should be sufficient to monitor and measure program effectiveness and serve as the basis for planning and future curriculum development and professional growth activities for overall school improvement.

4.7 *Facilities and Equipment*

Each school should evidence that sufficient, appropriate, and safe facilities and equipment have been employed to create a positive learning environment for its students and that meets all pertinent building, health, and other legal requirements for operations.

4.7.1 *Safety and Maintenance of Facilities and Equipment*

The school should demonstrate that all facilities are safe and routinely maintained to assure they remain in good, effective, working order and all legal and code requirements are met.

4.7.2 *Instructional Materials and Equipment*

Schools should evidence that they have access to appropriate and sufficient instructional materials and equipment necessary for the requirements of their instructional program and the needs of their students.

4.7.3 *Technology, Resources, and Media*

Each school should demonstrate that it provides sufficient access to quality technology, learning, and media resources.

4.8 *Student Support Services*

Each school should be able to supply information regarding student support services or opportunities offered. The accrediting association may also stipulate minimal support services that it requires of its member schools.

4.9 *Advertising and Publications*

The accrediting association will stipulate that its schools must maintain the highest professional and ethical standards in advertising, correspondence, and other publications.

The accrediting association may also take such disciplinary action against schools violating these standards as may be necessary and prudent to protect the reputation of the association and its membership.

4.9.1 *Legal and Ethical Guidelines*

The accrediting association will require that its schools adhere to all legal and ethical considerations regarding the release of information to the public and in the development, production, and distribution of all publications and other forms of information release.

4.9.2 *Statement of Accreditation Status*

Schools will appropriately refer to their participation in the accreditation program and report their status levels correctly and ethically. Further, the accrediting association will require that its schools release, upon request by the general public, accurate information regarding their current level of participation in accreditation.

4.9.3 *Institutional Publications, Correspondence, and Materials*

All school publications, correspondence, and other materials should accurately represent the school in a

professional and ethical manner. Further, the accrediting association will require that its schools maintain this high level of ethics and honesty in all communications and material submitted to the school's public(s) as well as to the association.

DOCUMENTATION FOR STANDARD AREA 4.0: The accrediting association will submit a copy in electronic form and hard copy of its current accreditation manual in its entirety and, as related to each standard, excerpts from the accreditation manual (or other pertinent materials) within the appropriate sections of the self-study notebook. Include the standard number and title (e.g., 4.1 *Mission and Purpose*) for each entry.

- 4.1 A copy of the accreditation standard(s) and other requirement(s) relating to school mission and/or purpose, including provisions for (4.1.1) philosophy and (4.1.2) goals.
- 4.2 A copy of the accreditation standard(s) and other requirement(s) relating to administrative and legal operations of the school including (4.2.1) statements of nondiscrimination, (4.2.2) organizational structure, (4.2.3) attention to federal, state, and local regulations, and (4.2.4) strategic planning.
- 4.3 A copy of the accreditation standard(s) and other requirement(s) relating to fiscal management and accountability for the school, including attention to (4.3.1) budget, (4.3.2) tuition and fees/refund policy, (4.3.3) reports and records, and (4.3.4) financial/resource development.
- 4.4 A copy of the accreditation standard(s) and other requirement(s) relating to school personnel (qualification, conditions of employment, etc.) including (4.4.1) administration, (4.4.2) faculty, (4.4.3) support staff, (4.4.4) employment policies and procedures, and (4.4.5) personnel records.
- 4.5 A copy of the accreditation standard(s) and other requirement(s) relating to student policies and procedures including (4.5.1) admissions, (4.5.2) student supervision and discipline, (4.5.3) student safety and access, (4.5.4) assessment of student performance/grading, and (4.5.5) student records.
- 4.6 A copy of the accreditation standard(s) and other requirement(s) relating to school curriculum and instructional program including (4.6.1) academic calendar and attendance policies, (4.6.2) description of programs, (4.6.3) curriculum materials and methodology, (4.6.4) program evaluation, effectiveness, and improvement.

- 4.7 A copy of the accreditation standard(s) and other requirement(s) relating to school facilities and equipment including provisions for (4.7.1) safety and maintenance of facilities and equipment, (4.7.2) instructional materials and equipment, and (4.7.3) technology, learning resources, and media.
- 4.8 A copy of the accreditation standard(s) or other requirement(s) relating to student support services.
- 4.9 A copy of the accreditation standard(s) or other requirement(s) relating to school advertising and publications including (4.9.1) legal and ethical considerations, (4.9.2) statement of accreditation status, and (4.9.3) school publications, correspondence, and materials.

BYLAWS OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR PRIVATE SCHOOL ACCREDITATION

**NATIONAL COUNCIL
FOR
PRIVATE SCHOOL ACCREDITATION**



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ARTICLE I

Name and Office

The name of this corporation is the NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR PRIVATE SCHOOL ACCREDITATION, hereafter referred to as NCPSA. NCPSA is incorporated under the laws of the District of Columbia, including the District of Columbia Nonprofit Corporation Act.

The principal registered office of NCPSA is 700 1 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., in the city of Washington, D.C. 20001. The corporation may also have such other offices, either within or outside the District of Columbia, as the National Council may determine or as the affairs of the corporation may from time to time require.

Further, NCPSA will have and continuously maintain in the District of Columbia a registered office and a registered agent whose official office is identical with such registered office, as required by the District of Columbia Nonprofit Corporation Act. The address of the registered office may be changed from time to time as the National Council may determine.

ARTICLE II

Purpose, Rationale, and Imperatives

Section 1: Purpose of NCPSA

The NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR PRIVATE SCHOOL ACCREDITATION is organized exclusively for educational purposes within the scope of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 and as amended. Specifically, the purposes of the NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR PRIVATE SCHOOL ACCREDITATION include:

- 1) To encourage the accreditation process as an organizational witness of the credibility for the early childhood, elementary, and secondary private school sector, as characterized by voluntary peer recognition based on accepted and published standards of excellence;
- 2) To provide NCPSA accreditation to any of NCPSA's member associations' schools that are accredited & in good standing with their association. This provision for NCPSA to accredit schools &/or educational centers does not extend beyond NCPSA's member associations. Implementation including fees, policies, & procedures will be established by the Executive Committee whose actions & recommendation may be reviewed by the full Council as provided in these Bylaws under Article VI, Sections 3 & 4;

- 3) To provide national & international leadership & communication for private school accreditation through the recognition and voluntary association of credible & responsible private school accrediting associations in the United States & and in other countries;
- 4) To recognize, encourage, and improve the quality and diversity of private early childhood, elementary, and secondary education including, but not necessarily limited to, the development of educational and research activities, services, and opportunities related to accreditation;
- 5) To engage freely in all lawful activities and efforts, including the solicitation of grants and contributions that may reasonably be intended or expected to promote and advance these goals; and
- 6) To carry on any other business related to the foregoing purposes and to have and exercise all the powers conferred by the laws of the District of Columbia upon corporations formed under the District of Columbia Nonprofit Corporation Act.

Section 2: Rationale

The NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR PRIVATE SCHOOL ACCREDITATION is dedicated to the accreditation process as a viable and responsible means of establishing a witness of school excellence. NCPSA is committed to accreditation based on the concept of voluntary peer recognition; that is, the principle that institutions sharing common purposes and distinctives are better able to assist one another in achieving the standards for academic excellence and responsiveness to their respective publics and the nation.

The NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR PRIVATE SCHOOL ACCREDITATION seeks to promote and support independent and autonomous accrediting associations serving the private early childhood, elementary, and secondary sector and which are committed to quality educational programs while supportive of NCPSA's purposes.

Section 3: Accreditation Imperatives

NCPSA recognizes that a valid and responsible accreditation process contains the following elements for both the national and international organizations as well as its member accrediting associations:

- a) **Standards.** To be an effective and credible witness of academic and professional quality, the standards must be professionally established and published. These standards are to be readily understood by the clientele and sufficient to determine effectiveness based on sound educational practices. NCPSA recognizes and supports the right of individual accrediting associations to establish their own

individual, yet comparable, standards in support of their distinctive purposes and priorities in their accreditation of private early childhood, elementary, and secondary schools.

- b) **Self-Study.** Integral to the accreditation process is the opportunity to engage in a self-study process, whereby effectiveness may be assessed based on established standards and guidelines, necessary improvements are made, and results are reported. Accreditation will contain a self-study element and incorporate this element in its review and recognition process.
- c) **Site Visit.** On-site evaluation is critical to the objective validation of effectiveness in the accreditation process. Evaluation is to be conducted by persons with no vested interest, familiar in the accreditation standards and procedures, and knowledgeable of sound educational practices. The results of the site visit will serve as a key element in the formal review and recognition process.
- d) **Publication.** In order to be credible and responsible to various and appropriate publics, standards and procedures must be published and made available to public inquiry. Further, information related to the accreditation status of members must also be published and available upon appropriate request.
- e) **Reevaluation.** Reevaluation is essential to insure that members are maintaining the level of quality present at their initial recognition. To do so, the accreditation process will provide for the periodic reevaluation of members.

ARTICLE III Membership

Section 1: Qualifications

The NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR PRIVATE SCHOOL ACCREDITATION membership is comprised of private education associations and agencies in the United States and other countries dedicated to the accreditation of private early childhood, elementary, and secondary schools and which are willing to support the purposes, standards, procedures, and other requirements of NCPSA.

Any accrediting association seeking recognition by the NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR PRIVATE SCHOOL ACCREDITATION will make application & provide supportive materials as requested by NCPSA. All prospective members are required to meet specific standards as well as procedural requirements in order to be considered for membership. These requirements will be established by NCPSA in order to define its constituency, based on the following basic characteristics sought for each member association:

- a) Has legal authority and appropriate approval to operate and grant its credentials of accreditation.
- b) Has operation headquarters based in the United States. Foreign-based accrediting associations are eligible for membership in NCPSA.
- c) Is committed to the accreditation of private early childhood, elementary, and/or secondary schools as evidenced in its statement of purpose, list of members, or other documentation. [NOTE: Accrediting associations which *exclusively* represent public schools, day care centers, postsecondary institutions, or other adult level institutions are ineligible.]
- d) Includes in its accreditation process the five accreditation imperatives of Standards, Self-Study, Site Visit, Publication, and Reevaluation consistent with Article II, Section III of these Bylaws.
- e) Serves as well-defined constituency and makes available basic data of its membership. [NOTE: Prospective member associations will conform with appropriate nondiscriminatory practices.]
- f) Is established in the field of private school accreditation by having member schools at the final stage of its accreditation process for at least one (1) full year.
- g) Has evidence of sufficient resources and clientele for the fulfilling of its purposes and its successful continuance by representing a

sufficient number of members to be considered a viable accrediting association in areas of organization, programs, and finances.

- h) Is willing to comply with all NCPSA standards, pay all required fees & expenses, attend required meetings, & provide necessary information to the National Council & official representatives to fulfill the national recognition process.
- i) Agrees to publish and allow to be published or otherwise made known to other agencies, institutions, or individuals both its standards of accreditation and its list of member schools with their accreditation status.
- j) Is willing to fulfill all other policies, procedures, criteria, standards, etc., as specified and required by the National Council in its official publications and announcements for recognition and continuation of membership in NCPSA.

Section 2: Recognition Process

- A. ***Application.*** An accrediting association desiring to make application to the NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR PRIVATE SCHOOL ACCREDITATION must send an official letter of intent (signed by the chief administrative officer) and any other requested forms, materials, and exhibits to the Executive Director of NCPSA.
- B. ***Self-Study and Site Visit (Association Review).*** Based on the NCPSA manual, the accrediting association applying for membership or being reevaluated will participate in a self-study process of the accrediting association, including the preparation of required exhibits and a site visit to the accrediting association to validate the self-study. A summary report with the recommendations of the site committee will be forwarded to the Commission on Standards and Review with a copy to the contact person of the accrediting association being reviewed.
- C. ***Recommendation of the Commission on Standards and Review.*** Prior to the meeting of the National Council, the Commission on Standards and Review will meet to discuss any accrediting associations or agencies being considered for membership or reevaluation at the upcoming meeting. The Commission will then review any and all materials received, as well as any preliminary reviews conducted, and make its formal recommendation to the National Council. A simple majority vote of those representatives present at a quorum meeting of the Commission and eligible to vote will be required for an official recommendation to be made. (A Commissioner may not vote regarding the accrediting association which he or she represents.) Recommendations of the Commission on Standards and Review will be:
- 1) *Accept for Membership*
 - 2) *Accept for Provisional Membership* (with specific conditions cited to bring the association into full compliance)
 - 3) *Membership Denied/Revoked*

Each accrediting association being review by the Commission will be notified of the Commission's recommendation prior to the meeting of the National Council.

- D. ***Decision by the National Council.*** The National Council will receive the recommendations from the Commission for Standards and Review. All accrediting associations being considered as new applicants or being

reevaluated are required to be present and available for interview with the National Council during the meeting at which they are being considered.

The National Council will vote on each accrediting association being presented for membership or reevaluation. A majority of those representatives present for quorum at the meeting and eligible to vote will be sufficient for an official ruling. A representative serving on the National Council, however, may not vote regarding the accrediting association which he or she represents.

- E. *Complaints and Appeals.*** Any complaint or appeal pertaining to the findings of the initial review, recommendation(s) of the site visit committee, or the recommendation of the Commission of Standards and Review must be in writing and must be filed with the Executive Director prior to the meeting. A complaint or appeal regarding the decision of the National Council must be submitted in writing to the Executive Director within thirty (30) days of the decision.

The Executive Director will forward any complaints or appeals received to the National Council which makes all final determinations regarding complaints or appeals filed. In the event that the National Council is not in session or a regular meeting of the National Council is not immediately forthcoming, said complaint or appeal will be referred to the Executive Committee. Executive Committee is not empowered to change any decision of the National Council; however, it may conduct a preliminary review & forward its recommendation to the National Council which may then call a special meeting or take official action without a meeting according to the provisions of Article VII as may be appropriate.

Section 3: Privileges of Membership

Those accrediting associations and agencies accepted for membership in the NCPSA will be represented on the National Council and included on the published membership list. Further, each member will participate in all rights and privileges of membership as described in the Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws, and the NCPSA manual for the duration of its continuance in NCPSA.

Section 4: Conditions and Term of Membership

Official recognition and membership into the NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR PRIVATE SCHOOL ACCREDITATION is based upon due and proper application, participation in a self-study and site visit, review by the Commission for Standards and Review, and final ruling by the National Council as outlined in Section 2 above and in the NCPSA manual. Once an accrediting association has been accepted, it must meet and maintain all requirements, standards, and other procedures that have been established and as validated by periodic review by the National Council in

accordance with these Bylaws. Further, continuance in NCPSA is contingent on the payment of all required fees, submission of acceptable annual reports, and participation in the periodic reevaluation process. Should a member of NCPSA fail to maintain these stipulations, it may be removed from membership by the National Council according to the procedures described in these Bylaws.

ARTICLE IV

National Council

Section 1: Responsibilities and Authority

The National Council is the legal governing body and Board of Directors of NCPSA, fulfilling the purposes of NCPSA as stated in the Articles of Incorporation and these Bylaws and representing the wishes and intent of its membership. The property and affairs of this corporation are directed and supervised by the National Council, which will never consist of fewer than three (3) members.

The number of voting representatives on the National Council will be no fewer than one (1) duly appointed representative for each officially recognized accrediting association which is a member of NCPSA. In addition, the National Council will elect public representatives and appoint ex officio representatives according to the provisions of Section 2 following:

The National Council is officially entrusted to implement the purposes, rationale, and accreditation imperatives of NCPSA as contained in Article II. Further, the National Council is empowered with the legal representation of NCPSA and will be charged with the final responsibility of all business of the corporation. Additional responsibilities of the National Council include, but are not necessarily limited to, the following:

- 1) Approve and review all matters pertaining to major administrative policies, programs, and transactions;
- 2) Conduct the annual meeting; hear, review, and make decisions regarding recommendations of the Commission on Standards and Review and the National Advisors;
- 3) Elect and remove officers in accordance with Article V of these Bylaws; to guide and counsel the officers of the National Council as they fulfill their duties;
- 4) Evaluate the needs of NCPSA and devise programs and activities to meet them in accordance with established procedures and guidelines; review, approve, implement, and evaluate all ongoing NCPSA programs, personnel, services, and activities and their effectiveness;
- 5) Serve as the final authority on all decisions related to acceptance, continuance, and removal from membership in NCPSA;

- 6) Conduct studies, make recommendations, and fulfill directives regarding affiliations, membership, approvals, and recognitions of governmental and nongovernmental entities;
- 7) Participate in and approve financial decisions of NCPSA including the establishment of the fiscal year, approval of the annual budget, review and approval of periodic statements of fiscal operations, and setting of membership fees and other charges;
- 8) Determine persons authorized to sign checks, drafts, or other order for payment of money in the name of the corporation and to select or remove persons to serve as corporate agents or representatives of NCPSA;
- 9) Approve all standards, procedures, and policies affecting the membership;
- 10) Monitor education policy and legislation in the United States at the national, federal, state, and local level concerning their impact on private school accreditation;
- 11) Maintain appropriate liaison with federal, national, state, and local government and education officials;
- 12) Provide input and recommendations at the national, federal, state, and local level to both public and private education agencies and conduct such studies as may be appropriate;
- 13) Establish and maintain appropriate communications and activities with businesses, corporations, foundations, etc. in areas of mutual interest and concern;
- 14) Establish and approve any other committees not provided for in these Bylaws; establish such duties and powers of these committees as the National Council may prescribe in accordance with the provisions of the Articles of Incorporation and these Bylaws; select or change the membership of said committees, or discontinue them;
- 15) Review, approve, implement, and evaluate any international liaisons and agreements;
- 16) Appoint representatives to the Commission for National Standards and Review, the National Advisors, the Executive Director, public representatives to the National Council, and any other agents,

- representatives, or committee members that may be required;
- 17) Implement and interpret bylaws, standards, procedures, and policies of NCPSA including any rulings on waivers or exceptions; serve as the final authority on any complaints or appeals filed by NCPSA members;
 - 18) Review and amend the Article of Incorporation or the Bylaws;
 - 19) Perform any other duties or responsibilities that may be legally required or as may be appropriate or necessary to the purposes and continued operation of NCPSA.

Section 2: Official Representatives and Alternates

- A. One official representative from each fully recognized member accrediting association, as designated in writing by its legal governing entity, will serve on the National Council and will vote on behalf of the accrediting association represented. Each fully recognized member accrediting association will likewise designate an alternate who has no voting power or authority on the National Council, except in the absence or inability of the official representative from his or her accrediting association or a temporary vacancy in said position. The National Council may also establish such specified duties and limitations for the position of alternate as may be appropriate.

Voting representation on the Council for those persons representing member associations commences at the end of the meeting of the National Council during which final and full recognition and membership in NCPSA is conferred. Appointment to the National Council (unless replaced by his or her accrediting association) is continuous until the member accrediting association he or she represents is removed from membership in NCPSA.

The official representative and the alternate representing each NCPSA member will serve continuously for the duration of his or her accrediting association's membership with NCPSA or until removed by the accrediting association he or she represents.

- B. Accrediting associations who are charter members of NCPSA will be represented on the National Council by their duly appointed representatives or alternates, unless said representative is removed by the accrediting association represented. At that time, each charter member must be officially recognized by the National Council in order to continue in NCPSA and have a representative on the National Council. Denial of membership to a charter member will result in discontinuance of all

privileges in NCPSA and immediate removal of said member's representative on the National Council.

- C. The National Council will elect public representatives to the National Council who have no personal or professional ties to any accrediting association that is a member or prospective member of NCPSA; however, at no time will the number of public representatives exceed 25% of the total number of representatives (including public representative positions). Public representatives are elected at the annual meeting of the National Council to a term of three (3) years. A person who has served as a public representative may be reelected for an additional term of three (3) years; at which time at least twelve months must have passed in order to be reconsidered for reelection.

Priority will be given to elect at least one public representative from a state educational agency and at least one public member from a regional accrediting association.

Persons elected initially as public representatives on the National Council may be elected to one-, two-, and/or three-year terms of office in order to establish rotating terms. Subsequent persons elected to established public representative positions on the National Council will serve for three-year terms of office.

- D. The Executive Director serves as a nonvoting, ex officio representative on the National council continuously by virtue of his or her appointment. Further, the National Council may appoint such other nonvoting, ex officio representatives as it may deem necessary and appropriate for its operations. All nonvoting, ex officio representatives will be duly notified of all meetings and activities of the National Council and will be so identified at all meetings.

Section 3: Removal from Membership and Vacancies

- A. Those representatives and alternates serving by virtue of their representation of a member accrediting association may serve for the duration of that member association's continuance as a member of NCPA. Should the member accrediting association withdraw or be removed from NCPA membership, or cease operations, said representative and alternate will automatically and immediately forfeit his or her position in NCPA.
- B. Those representatives on the National Council serving by virtue of their election as public representatives may be removed from office by a majority vote of the representatives in attendance at a regular or special quorum meeting according to the provisions of Article VII.

Should a public representative of the National Council vacate his or her office by death, resignation, or removal from office, his or her successor may be elected by the National Council at a regular or special quorum meeting according to the provisions of Article VII.

- C. Any nonvoting, ex officio representative on the National Council (with the exception of the Executive Director) serves only at the discretion of the National Council and as such may be removed at any time upon the majority vote of National Council at any regular or special quorum meeting according to the provisions of Article VII.

The Executive Director will continue as a nonvoting, ex officio representative on the Council until removal is affected by the National Council as stipulated in Article VII.

Section 4: Voting

Each member accrediting association has only one (1) official representative serving on the National Council and, regardless of other persons present from said accrediting association, has only one (1) vote to cast at meetings of the National Council. Public representatives on the National Council each have one (1) vote.

The Executive Director may not vote at any National Council meeting, nor may any other ex officio representative of the Council; however, these persons may participate in discussions, provide information, and voice opinions on motions being voted on by the Council.

The act of a majority of representatives duly selected to serve on the National Council at which a quorum is present will be the act of the National Council, serving as the legal board of directors of NCPA, unless the act of a greater number is required by law, the Articles of Incorporation, or these Bylaws.

Section 5: Meetings

The National Council is required to meet at least two times per year, one which must be the annual meeting. The National Council may provide by resolution or bylaw the time and place of its regular meetings.

During the annual meeting, the National Council will conduct any necessary elections, conduct hearings and rule on membership, review and approve the annual budget, and conduct any other necessary or required business of NCPA.

All regular and special meetings of the National Council are presided by the Chair of the National Council and require a quorum for official business to be transacted. All other requirements as contained in Article VII apply to meetings of the National Council.

ARTICLE V

Officers

Section 1: Titles and Terms of Office

The following are the Officers of the National Council: Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer. The National Council may elect or appoint such other officers, including one or more Assistant Secretaries and one or more Assistant Treasurers, as it may deem convenient and appropriate to the affairs of NCPSA.

Officers are elected by majority vote of the National Council during its annual meeting or other designated meeting fulfilling quorum and all other requirements specified in Article VII. Only official representatives from accrediting associations or agencies which are current NCPSA members may be elected as officers; public and ex officio representatives may not serve as officers.

The Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer serve two-year terms of office.

All terms of office terminate at the end of the annual meeting where the successor has been selected for office.

Upon the expiration of the Chair's term of office, the Vice chair will assume the office of Chair of the National Council. The vacant office of Vice Chair will be filled by election by the National Council as previously stated.

Section 2: Removal from Office and Vacancies

An officer may be removed from office by a majority vote of the National Council at a regular or special meeting according to the provisions of Article VII. Officers of the Council serve their terms as indicated in Section 1, unless removed by the National Council or if no longer representing an official member association.

In the event that an officer's position becomes vacant, the National Council selects a successor according to the provisions of Section 1. The elected successor will serve the remainder of the term and may succeed himself/herself to an additional full term of office as qualified.

Section 3: Chair of the National Council

The Chair of the National Council presides at all Council meetings and brings such items for consideration as appropriate and necessary for the successful operation of NCPSA. The Chair retains voting privileges on the National Council and also serves as legal signatory of NCPSA and representative of the National

Council and NCPSA in all required official capacities. The Chair presides over the Executive Committee, retaining full voting privileges. The Chair also serves as a nonvoting, ex officio member of all commissions, advisories, or committees.

The Chair of the National Board serves as the President of the corporation and its principal executive officer and shall, in general, supervise all of the business and affairs of the corporation. The Chair will sign any deeds, mortgages, bonds, contracts, or other instruments which the National Council has authorized to be executed, except in cases where the signing and execution thereof will be expressly designated by the National Council to some other officer or agent of NCPSA; and any other duties incident to the office of President and as may from time to time be assigned by the National Council.

Section 4: Vice Chair

The Vice Chair assists the Chair in the performance of duties and will have such other responsibilities as may be assigned by the Chair. The Vice Chair serves as ex officio member of all commissions, advisories, or committees (with the exception of the Executive Committee where full voting privileges are retained). He or she will fill the office of Chair of the National Council in his or her absence or disability, or in the event of a temporary or permanent vacancy in the office of Chair. The Vice Chair will succeed the Chair upon the expiration of the present Chair's term of office.

Section 5: Secretary

The Secretary is responsible for the oversight of all functions related to the office and may delegate, as appropriate, any duties of the office to the Executive Director or other qualified personnel.

The Secretary keeps or supervises the keeping of the official minutes and records of all Council meetings and activities. He or she supervises all correspondence on behalf of the National Council and notifications of meetings and will have all appropriate decisions, reports, and resolutions placed into the official minutes. The Secretary also consults with the Executive Director regarding management of records and files and related office procedures.

Section 6: Treasurer

The Treasurer is responsible for the oversight of all functions related to the office and may delegate, as appropriate, any duties of the office to the Executive Director or other qualified personnel.

The Treasurer assists in the development of the annual budget. He or she oversees the Executive Director in the maintenance of official copies of the budget and any revisions. The Treasurer supervises and advises the Executive Director in matters related to corporate funds in fulfillment of National Council directives. The Treasurer will also be advised by the Executive Director concerning the development and maintenance of financial reports, records, and pertinent files pertaining to NCPSA.

Section 7: Officers of the Corporation

The officers of the National Council serve as the corporate officers of NCPSA. The Chair of the National Council serves as the President of the corporation; the Vice chair serves as the Vice President of the corporation. The Secretary and Treasurer, respectively, serve as the Secretary and Treasurer of the corporation.

ARTICLE VI

Executive Committee

Section 1: Membership

- A. The Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer of the National Council serve continuously on the Executive Committee by virtue of their elected office and each retains full voting privileges on the Executive Committee.
- B. The National Council will elect one (1) public representative from the National Council to serve on the Executive Committee with full voting privileges. The public representative serves for the duration of his or her term as a representative until expiration of the term or upon removal from his or her position on the council.
- C. The Executive Director serves as a nonvoting, ex officio member of the Executive Committee continuously by virtue of his or her position. He or she is to be notified of all meetings and will report on such NCPA operations and business as required.
- D. The immediate past Chair of the National Council may also serve as an ex officio, nonvoting member of the Executive Committee until such time as he or she is replaced by a successor.
- E. The National Council may also appoint such other persons as may be appropriate to serve nonvoting, ex officio positions on the Executive Committee to any appropriate term of service as may be specified or until removed by the National Council.

Section 2: Officers of the Executive Committee

The Officers of the National Council serve their respective functions on the Executive Committee.

Section 3: Responsibility and Authority

The Executive Committee is responsible and accountable to the National Council and represents the Council and its wishes in all business within its charge. The Executive Committee is charged with the following:

- 1) To make recommendations to the National Council regarding changes

to the existing Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws;

- 2) To make recommendations to the National Council regarding changes to NCPSA accreditation standards, policies, and procedures; to make recommendations regarding operating policies and procedures;
- 3) To review and make recommendations regarding annual budget preparation and the establishment of membership fees and charges;
- 4) To make recommendations regarding the employment, continuance, and termination of the Executive Director;
- 5) To represent the National Council when it is not in session and as may be specifically directed by the Council in the following:
 - a) Implementation of the approved budget;
 - b) Issues requiring legal action of NCPSA (within the specifications of the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws);
 - c) Staff employment other than the Executive Director;
 - d) General operating policies and procedures;
 - e) Annual evaluations of the Executive Director;
 - f) Participation in establishing the agenda and any required reports for meetings of the National Council;
 - g) Studies, investigations, preliminary reviews as may be directed by the National Council or these Bylaws;
 - h) Other responsibilities as specified by the National Council.

Section 4: Limitations

The Executive Committee legally functions on behalf of the National Council when it is not in session except in the following matters:

- 1) Acceptance or denial of applications for membership;
- 2) Granting or terminating membership, provisional membership, and/or any other recognition or status designation by NCPSA;
- 3) Changes to the Articles of Incorporation or Bylaws; changes to

established NCPA accreditation standards, policies, or procedures;

- 4) Disposition or alienation of property or major assets of NCPA;
- 5) Hiring or termination of the Executive Director;
- 6) Changes in previous decisions of the National Council or specific directives or guidelines established by the Council;
- 7) Changes or limitations to official representatives duly selected to the National Council;
- 8) Any other matters so specified by the National Council or otherwise stated in the Articles of Incorporation or Bylaws.

Section 5: Meetings

The Executive Committee meets at least twice a year prior to the regular meetings of the National Council and as required for the necessary operations of NCPA. The Executive Committee will keep minutes of its official actions and promptly submit copies of the minutes of each meeting to all representatives on the National Council.

ARTICLE VII. Meetings

Section 1: Quorum

Unless otherwise stated in these Bylaws, quorum for all regular or special meetings of any official body, committee, or other group established by NCPSA is a majority of the current membership of said group, except the National Council itself. No official business may be conducted at any meeting at which a quorum is not present except for the adjournment of that meeting.

Quorum for all regular or special meetings of the National Council will be those representatives present, provided all representatives of the National Council have been duly and properly notified of said meeting in accordance with these Bylaws. Nonattendance of Council representatives at any regular or special meeting will be taken as consent with any official action taken by the National Council at said meeting, unless written notification is submitted to NCPSA prior to the beginning of that meeting.

Unless otherwise stated in these Bylaws, a majority of those members present and eligible to vote at a quorum meeting is required to pass motions and rule on official business.

In the event of vacancies within any official body, committee, or other group established by NCPSA, the remaining membership, although less than a quorum, may be a majority vote to elect a successor or successors to fill such vacancy for the unexpired term in accordance with the provisions of these Bylaws.

Section 2: Regular Meetings

All official bodies, committees, or other groups established by the NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR PRIVATE SCHOOL ACCREDITATION will conduct such meetings as prescribed by these Bylaws and as necessary to the business of NCPSA. Said body, committee, or other group may provide by resolution the time and place of its meetings.

The National Council is required to hold at least two (2) regular meetings per year, one of which is to be designated as its annual meeting. All other official bodies, committees, or other groups established by NCPSA will conduct such meetings as required by these Bylaws or by established policies and procedures.

Section 3: Special Meetings

In addition to regular meetings, the Chair of any official body, committee, or other group within NCPSA, or the majority of said group, may call such special meetings as may be needed with no other business conducted at that meeting except the expressed purpose(s). The person authorized to call special meetings of said group may fix the time and place of the meeting. He or she will make or cause to be made notification to all members (including ex officio members) by telephone, mail, telegraph, or other electronic transmission at least ten (10) business days prior to the date of the meeting.

Notification may be waived with the unanimous consent of the members. Quorum and all other procedures regarding meetings will remain in effect.

Members protesting notification of special meetings must do so at the beginning of the meeting; and should improper notification be determined, the meeting will be immediately adjourned with no additional business conducted.

Section 4: Official Business without Formal Meetings

At the discretion of the Chair of any official body, committee, or other group established by NCPSA, said group may conduct official business (including elections) by mail, telephone, teleconference, facsimile, or other approved electronic media; with the exception of the annual meeting held by the National Council.

The Chair of any group may send or transmit, or cause to be sent or transmitted, notification and any appropriate materials to each member (including ex officio members) at his or her currently registered address with NCPSA and include a reasonable date for response. Minutes of all official actions taken by mail, telephone, teleconference, facsimile, or other approved electronic media will be

communicated in writing to each member of said group and entered into the official minutes.

ARTICLE VIII

NCPSA Employees

Section 1: Executive Director

The Executive Director is to be employed by the National Council, which will specify the duties, salary, and benefits related to the position. The National Council is responsible for the direct hiring, compensation, and retention/termination of the Executive Director with necessary input and review by the Executive Committee.

The Executive Director is the chief staff official of the NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR PRIVATE SCHOOL ACCREDITATION and is charged with the daily business, representation, and necessary operations of NCPSA. The Executive Director will be a nonvoting, ex officio representative on the National Council and all commissions, committees, advisories, or other bodies established by the National Council.

Section 2: Other Staff

The NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR PRIVATE SCHOOL ACCREDITATION will retain such other staff as may be necessary and expedient to its needs and operations. All staff members are to be selected by the Executive Director duly operating under any salary guidelines and employment procedures as established by NCPSA.

The Executive Director is also charged with the supervision, compensation, development, and retention/termination of any paid NCPSA staff.

ARTICLE IX

Commission on Standards and Review

Section 1: Membership

- A. The Chair & Vice Chair of the National Council & the Executive Director serve as nonvoting, ex officio members of the Commission on Standards & Review.
- B. A minimum of nine (9) voting Commissioners may be elected by the National Council.

Seven (7) of these Commissioners will be filled by persons nominated by current member accrediting associations and elected to service by the National Council. Such nominees from member associations need not be an association's representative on the National Council.

The remaining two (2) Commissioners will be public representatives elected to service by the National Council (and not necessarily holding current public representative positions on the National Council).

Section 2: Officers of the Commission

Officers of the Commission on Standards and Review are: Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary. These officers are appointed by the National Council from current voting members of the Commission and serve three-year terms unless said Commissioner becomes ineligible for service on the Commission or is replaced.

Section 3: Responsibilities

The Commission on Standards and Review assists the NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR PRIVATE SCHOOL ACCREDITATION by recommending and reviewing accrediting standards, policies, and procedures to the National Council. The Commission also reviews all applications for membership, annual reports, reevaluations and inquiries, and makes recommendations to the Council. The Commission also makes appropriate investigations, visits, and evaluations of applicants and member organizations. In addition, the Commission conducts such investigations and studies as directed by the National Council.

Section 4: Term of Service

- A. The Chair and Vice Chair of the National Council and the Executive Director serve continuously as nonvoting, ex officio members of the Commission on Standards and Review.

- B. All appointed Commissioners serve three-year rotating terms of service. Commissioners may be initially assigned one-, two-, and three-year terms of service to create a schedule of rotation. Upon expiration of their terms, their successors may serve for a full three-year term.

Section 5: Removal from Office and Vacancies

Commissioners serve at the discretion of the National Council, and appointed Commissioners may be removed from service by a majority vote of the National Council at a regular or scheduled meeting according to the provisions of Article VII.

Vacancies in elected Commission positions due to death, resignation, disqualification, or removal from service will be filled by election by the National Council according to the provisions of Section 1.

Section 6: Meetings

The Commission for Standards and Review meets twice a year before each regular meeting of the National Council in accordance with the provisions of Article VII. The Commission will also meet as may be required in fulfillment of its duties and/or as specified by the National Council.

ARTICLE X

National Advisors

Section 1: Membership and Term of Service

- A. A maximum of fifteen (15) Advisors may be appointed as National Advisors by the National Council. Nominations for Advisors are to be made by the Executive Committee to the National Council for its review and approval.
- B. All appointed Advisors serve two-year rotating terms of service. Appointed Advisors may be initially assigned one- or two-year terms of service to create a schedule of rotation. Upon expiration of their terms, their successors may serve for a full two-year term.

Section 2: Responsibilities

National Advisors may serve individually and/or collectively to provide such advice, input, and expertise as may be requested by the National Council. They may also conduct investigations, studies, or issue reports that impact on the purposes and priorities of NCPSA and strengthen the overall goals and position of the National Council.

National Advisors may also contact other private school membership organizations and, as directed by the National Council, such governmental and private agencies as may be relevant to the purposes and operations of NCPSA. Advisors may also advise in areas related to private business, corporations, and foundations, as well as with other accrediting agencies.

Section 3: Officers

National Advisors serve the National Council directly and function without officers.

Section 4: Removal from Office and Vacancies

National Advisors serve at the discretion of the National Council and may be removed from service by a majority vote of the National Council at a regular or scheduled meeting according to the provisions of Article VII.

ARTICLE XI

Agents and Representatives

The National Council may appoint or otherwise authorize the appointment of such other agents and/or representatives in accordance with NCPSA Bylaws and with such powers to perform legal and proper acts and duties on behalf of NCPSA as the Council may determine. Legal agents and/or representatives may include officers or representatives of the National Council, employees of NCPSA, or other persons so designated by the National Council.

The NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR PRIVATE SCHOOL ACCREDITATION will indemnify all agents and/or representatives, as well as officers, representatives, commissioners, committee members, employees or other persons acting on behalf of NCPSA, as approved by the National Council or as may otherwise be selected or appointed, against all reasonable and necessary fines, fees, and expenses included by said individual in connection with any suit, litigation, or other legal action to which he or she has become involved by virtue of said office, appointment, employment, or necessary association with NCPSA; except in those circumstances where he or she will be adjudged and determined liable of willful misconduct or gross negligence in the performance of his or her duties and responsibilities on behalf of NCPSA.

ARTICLE XII

Financial Considerations

Section 1: Fiscal Year

The fiscal year is from July 1 through June 30.

Section 2: Income and Assets

The NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR PRIVATE SCHOOL ACCREDITATION may receive such income and/or participate in such income-producing activities as may be legal and permissible for a nonprofit corporation exempt from federal income tax under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 or under any corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue law and as may be necessary and expedient for the fulfillment of its purposes as stated in Article II.

Section 3: Operating Expenses

Within any fiscal year, total operating expenses for NCPSA will not exceed the total annual dues, gifts, donations, and earnings received for that year without the direct approval of the National Council.

Section 4: Membership Fees and Other Charges

The National Council will approve annually the schedule of membership fees, application fees, and other charges to be assessed on any members or prospective members of NCPSA and such fees and charges will be published and available upon request. Any changes to approved membership fees and related charges require the direct approval of the National Council.

Section 5: Disposition of Property and Assets

The National Council, in accordance with the NCPSA Bylaws, acts as legal trustees of any and all real or personal property of the NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR PRIVATE SCHOOL ACCREDITATION and any property accepted, held, sold, transferred, assigned, or otherwise conveyed by the Council will be so accomplished in the corporate name of the corporation. No real property of the corporation may be sold, leased, mortgaged, or otherwise conveyed or alienated without said action having been approved by the National Council in accordance with the Bylaws.

Section 6: Distribution of Earnings and Compensation

No officer, representative, commissioner, committee member, member

association or its representative, or any other private individual may receive funds or participate in the financial earnings of the NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR PRIVATE SCHOOL ACCREDITATION, with the exception of just and reasonable compensation for services rendered and/or expense incurred on behalf of NCPSA as approved by the National Council.

By resolution of the National Council, a fixed sum and expenses of attendance, if any, may be allowed to specified individuals for attendance at each regular or special meeting of the National Council. Further, nothing herein contained shall be construed to preclude any official representative sitting on the National Council from servicing the corporation in any other capacity and receiving compensation therefore.

The National Council established and approves the salary and benefits of the Executive Director and may establish guidelines and directives regarding the compensation of other NCPSA employees.

Section 7: Assets of Individuals within NCPSA

The personal or corporate assets of any officer, representative, commissioner, committee member, employee, or any other private individual acting as an agent or representative on behalf of NATIONAL COUNCIL OF PRIVATE SCHOOL ACCREDITATION will not be attached by NCPSA nor shall they be touched in any suit that may be filed against the corporation solely by virtue of association or membership in NCPSA; nor will the assets of member associations, their sponsoring agencies (if any), or their constituencies be similarly attached.

Section 8: Indemnification

The NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR PRIVATE SCHOOL ACCREDITATION will indemnify all representatives, officers, commissioners, committee members, agents, representatives, employees, or other persons acting on behalf of NCPSA, as approved by the National Council or as may otherwise be selected or appointed in accordance with the Bylaws, against all reasonable and necessary fines, fees, and expenses included by said individual in connection with any suit, litigation, or other legal action to which he or she has become involved by virtue of said office, appointment, employment, or necessary association with the NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR PRIVATE SCHOOL ACCREDITATION; except in those circumstances where he or she will be adjudged and determined liable of willful misconduct or gross negligence in the performance of his or her duties and responsibilities on behalf of NCPSA.

ARTICLE XIII
Statement of Nondiscrimination

The NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR PRIVATE SCHOOL ACCREDITATION and those persons acting in official capacities on behalf of NCPSA will not discriminate against any person or group of persons on the basis of age, gender, race, color, ethnic origin, religion, or physical disability.

NCPSA reserves the right to establish such conditions of membership and standards as consistent with its purposes as stated in Article II to insure the academic and professional quality of its membership in accordance with sound and established educational practices.

ARTICLE XIV Miscellaneous

Section 1: Affiliations and Endorsements

As the NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR PRIVATE SCHOOL ACCREDITATION represents a diversity of accrediting associations, it will refrain from endorsing, affiliating, or establishing membership with any political party, causes, or other groups. All member accrediting associations and their representatives will refrain from making such statements or otherwise indicating that NCPSA does endorse, affiliate, or have official relationship with any such political party, cause, or other group, regardless of the inclinations of any of the NCPSA constituency.

NCPSA may establish such liaisons, relationships, and memberships with professional organizations that could positively contribute to the accomplishment of its purposes as stated in Article II, provided such liaison, relationship, or membership does not specifically entail official endorsement by NCPSA or its members.

Acceptance and continuance of member accrediting associations in the NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR PRIVATE SCHOOL ACCREDITATION is not to be construed as official NCPSA support or promotion of the specific religious, political, or philosophical beliefs or causes of those members.

Section 2: Publication Statements

The NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR PRIVATE SCHOOL ACCREDITATION reserves the right to specify the means in which member accrediting associations or agencies may communicate their membership and participation in NCPSA, including specific wording.

Failure of a member or prospective member of NCPSA to properly publicize its relationship with the NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR PRIVATE SCHOOL ACCREDITATION or for a member or prospective member to publicize statements or communications that are fraudulent, misleading, or detrimental to the purposes of NCPSA may jeopardize its acceptance or continued membership in NCPSA.

ARTICLE XV Amendments

Section 1: Proposals for Amendments

Any accrediting association which is a member of NCPSA may submit a proposal for an amendment to these Articles of Incorporation or the Bylaws by submitting the proposal, in writing, through its representative on the National Council. All proposals for amendments must be initiated and certified by the governing board of said accrediting association.

Any proposals for amendments will be presented to the National Council or, if not in session, to the Executive Committee for its preliminary review.

Section 2: Approval of Amendments

Proposed amendments to the Articles of Incorporation or these Bylaws will be presented in writing to the National Council for discussion and voting. Amendments may only be passed by a simple majority vote of the National Council at a regularly scheduled meeting in accordance with the NCPSA Bylaws.

If so determined by the Executive Committee, voting on proposed amendments may be taken during the year by mail as outlined in the Bylaws. Ballots will be mailed to each member accrediting association, where votes will be made by its duly appointed representative. Ballots will be returned to the NCPSA office by the predetermined deadline. A simple majority vote, as validated by the Executive Committee or its designated representative, will be required for passage of the amendment.

APPENDIX A

NCPSA Application

FORM A: Application for Preliminary Review*

FORM B: Exhibits for Preliminary Review*

***The NCPSA Forms in Appendix A are available on a Digital Format. Contact the NCPSA office to order the "NCPSA Forms on a Digital Format."**

FORM A: APPLICATION FOR PRELIMINARY REVIEW

**FOR THE RECOGNITION OF ACCREDITING ASSOCIATIONS
FOR PRESCHOOL, ELEMENTARY, AND SECONDARY PRIVATE SCHOOLS**



NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR PRIVATE SCHOOL ACCREDITATION
P. O. Box 13686
Seattle, Washington 98198-1010
(253) 874-3408

Name of Accrediting Association

Contact Person

Title

Mailing Address

City

State

Zip Code

()

Phone

Date

APPLICATION FORM

Name of accrediting association

Date

Person completing this form

Title

PART I. BASIC DATA

1.
 - a) What year did this accrediting association begin accepting applications to its accreditation program? _____
 - b) What year did this accrediting association first issue its full recognition of a member school at its highest status of accreditation? _____
2.
 - a) State below the purpose(s) or mission statement of your accrediting association.
 - b) On which of the documents submitted with this application can this statement be found? (Cite page number, if appropriate.) _____
3. Describe below the distinctives that characterize your member schools.
4.
 - a) How many schools are currently involved in the accreditation program of your association (including pre-accreditation status levels)? _____
 - b) How many schools are currently fully recognized at the highest status of accreditation offered by your association? _____
5. Check below the appropriate boxes that describe any or all of your current membership (including pre-accreditation status levels). _____

<input type="checkbox"/> Early Childhood (with academic programs)	<input type="checkbox"/> Technical schools
<input type="checkbox"/> Day care centers	<input type="checkbox"/> Correspondence schools
<input type="checkbox"/> Elementary schools	<input type="checkbox"/> Nontraditional schools
<input type="checkbox"/> Secondary schools	<input type="checkbox"/> Schools located outside of the United States
<input type="checkbox"/> Home schools	<input type="checkbox"/> Bible colleges/institutes
<input type="checkbox"/> Residential schools	<input type="checkbox"/> Other postsecondary institutions
<input type="checkbox"/> Schools offering part-time or short-term academic programs only	
<input type="checkbox"/> Schools serving specialized student populations only (e.g., physically handicapped, learning disabled, mentally challenged, emotionally disturbed, troubled youth, etc.) Please describe: _____ _____ _____	
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify): _____ _____ _____	

PART I. BASIC DATA (continued)

6. List the category or categories in #5 that best describes the majority of your membership.

7. By whom is your accrediting association currently and officially recognized?

8. Please describe any affiliations, associations, or other arrangements with other organizations or agencies (accrediting or otherwise) that your accrediting association may have.

9. What other major services or activities does your association or agency conduct besides accreditations?

0. Include any other statements that you feel would help NCPSA better understand your accrediting association.

PART II. NCPSA APPLICATION EXHIBITS

INSTRUCTIONS: All accrediting associations making application to the National Council for Private School Accreditation are required to submit the following documents along with their application. (See FORM B for accompanying information.)

- 1) A copy of the current Articles of Incorporation for the accrediting association and a copy of its state charter and/or letter of approval
- 2) Official Bylaws for the accrediting association
- 3) Current list of its Board of Directors
- 4) Current membership, list by state, of all schools participating in its accreditation process
- 5) Accreditation handbook or other publications containing accreditation standards, procedures, and policies

NOTE: Eligibility is determined by established NCPSA requirements as contained in the NCPSA Bylaws and accreditation manual. An accrediting association must meet these basic eligibility requirements in order to enter the NCPSA accreditation preview process.

PART III. STATEMENT OF INTENT AND AGREEMENT

By signing this document and the payment of all required fees, the accrediting association is attesting to the truth and accuracy of this application form and all supporting documentation and hereby agrees to initiate the NCPSA recognition process.

The submission of this application or the payment of application fees does not necessarily guarantee acceptance nor otherwise obligate the National Council for Private School Accreditation.

"Please accept this document as our request to apply for membership in the National Council for Private School Accreditation. Approval to participate in NCPSA has been granted by the governing body responsible for the legal operations of our accrediting association."

"Our accrediting association understands that acceptance into the NCPSA recognition process is not automatic, nor is initial or continuing membership in NCPSA, but is contingent on the fulfilling of stated conditions of eligibility, standards, procedures, and other requirements; the payment of required fees; and continued review and periodic reevaluation as validated by official vote of the National Council."

"The submission of this application and supporting documentation indicates that our accrediting association is willing to comply with all established fees and expenses, provide the necessary and justifiable access to information and needed records, and fulfill any and all other policies, procedures, criteria, standards, etc. as specified and required by the National Council and promulgated in official publications and announcements for the recognition and continuation of accrediting associations in NCPSA."

"Further, our accrediting association will agree to publish or allow to be published or otherwise made known to other associations, institutions, or individuals both its standards of accreditation and its list of member schools with their accreditation status."

"A check of \$1500 is enclosed to cover the required application fee. I understand that payment in full is required before this application may be processed. I also understand that should our accrediting association withdraw before or during the review process, or is initially denied membership in NCPSA, \$500 may be refunded (unless additional expenses have been incurred)."

Signature of person completing this form

Date

Title of position with Applicant

Phone

FORM B: EXHIBITS FOR PRELIMINARY REVIEW

FOR THE RECOGNITION OF ACCREDITING ASSOCIATIONS FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD, ELEMENTARY, AND SECONDARY PRIVATE SCHOOLS

NOTE: All exhibits are to be placed in a notebook for ease of access and evaluation. The following review sheets are to be included with the exhibits and will be completed by NCPSA reviewer(s) at the time of the preliminary review. The accrediting association is directed to review these sheets as it compiles its exhibits to insure that all materials are complete and appropriate to determine eligibility. The application should place each sheet at the front of each respective exhibit within the notebook. PLACE THIS SHEET AT THE FRONT OF THE NOTEBOOK.

NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR PRIVATE SCHOOL ACCREDITATION
P. O. Box 13686
Seattle, Washington 98198-1010
(253) 874-3408

Name of Accrediting Association

Contact Person

Title

Mailing Address

City

State

Zip Code

Phone

Date

-
- | |
|--|
| 1a) A COPY OF THE CURRENT ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION
1b) A COPY OF ITS STATE CHARTER AND/OR LETTER OF APPROVAL |
|--|

Must include the following: date of filing and approval by the state.

NOTE: The applicant should place this sheet at the front of this exhibit.

REVIEWER COMMENTS:

- | | | |
|-----|----|---|
| YES | NO | a) Do the Articles of Incorporation and accompanying state charter and/or letter of approval evidence that the accrediting association has legal authority to operate? |
| YES | NO | b) Do the Articles of Incorporation and accompanying state charter and/or letter of approval attest that the accrediting association has its legal headquarters in the United States? |
| YES | NO | c) Do the Articles of Incorporation attest that the accrediting association has purposes and priorities consistent with the purposes and priorities of NCPSA? |

OTHER COMMENTS:

Reviewer

Date

2) OFFICIAL AND CURRENT BYLAWS

Must include the following: organization and functions of the Board of Directors, organization of the accrediting association, purpose and/or priorities of the accrediting association

NOTE: The applicant should place this sheet at the front of this exhibit.

REVIEWER COMMENTS:

- | | | |
|-----|----|---|
| YES | NO | a) Do the Bylaws provide sufficient direction for the operation of a professional and reputable accrediting association? |
| YES | NO | b) Do the Bylaws indicate that the organizational structure is appropriate to the needs of a professional accrediting association and responsive to its constituency? |
| YES | NO | c) Are the stated purposes and priorities appropriate for a professional and reputable accrediting association? |
| YES | NO | d) Do the Bylaws attest that the accrediting association has purposes and priorities consistent with the purposes and priorities of NCPSA? |

OTHER COMMENTS:

Reviewer

Date

3) CURRENT LIST OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Must include the following: names, addresses, dates of expiration of terms

NOTE: The applicant should place this sheet at the front of this exhibit.

REVIEWER COMMENTS:

- | | | |
|-----|----|--|
| YES | NO | a) Does the current Board of Directors constitute a legal board as specified by the Articles of Incorporation and/or Bylaws? |
| YES | NO | b) Does the current Board of Directors appear to be sufficient to meet the leadership needs of a professional and active accrediting association? |
| YES | NO | c) Does the current Board of Directors appear to include a well-balanced and responsive group of leaders, comparable to most accrediting associations of professional caliber? |

OTHER COMMENTS:

Reviewer

Date

4) CURRENT MEMBERSHIP LIST, BY STATE, OF ALL MEMBER SCHOOLS

Must include the following: names of all schools participating in the accreditation process, addresses, grade levels offered, contact persons, accreditation or pre-accreditation status levels. Also must indicate those schools that have been awarded full or final accreditation and the date that full accreditation was awarded. The membership list will also appropriately note any home schools, nontraditional or technical schools, day care centers, foreign-based schools, postsecondary or adult level schools, as well as any PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

NOTE: The applicant should place this sheet at the front of this exhibit.

REVIEWER COMMENTS:

- YES NO a) Does the membership list attest that the current membership list is of sufficient number to support the stated purposes and continued operations of the accrediting association?
- YES NO b) Do the current members appropriately represent, in number and nature, the clientele that the accrediting association has published as its constituency?
- YES NO c) Has the accrediting association refrained from accrediting public schools or accepting public schools into its accreditation program?
- YES NO d) Has the accrediting association evidenced that it does not EXCLUSIVELY represent day care centers, foreign-based schools, postsecondary institutions, or other adult level institutions?
- YES NO e) Does the current membership list indicate that the accrediting association is engaged in an active accreditation process comparable to most accrediting associations of professional caliber?
- YES NO f) Does the membership list indicate that the accrediting association has been recognizing schools at the full or final accreditation level for at least one (1) year?
- YES NO g) Does the accrediting association have, or does it appear it will soon have, a sufficient number of schools at the full or final accreditation level to provide professional leadership to the association?

OTHER COMMENTS:

Reviewer

Date

5) ACCREDITATION HANDBOOK, OR OTHER PUBLICATIONS CONTAINING ACCREDITATION STANDARDS, PROCEDURES, AND POLICIES

Must include the following: accreditation standards, accreditation procedures

NOTE: The applicant should place this sheet at the front of this exhibit.

REVIEWER COMMENTS:

- | | | |
|-----|----|---|
| YES | NO | a) Does the accrediting association have published accreditation standards consistent with its stated purposes and priorities? |
| YES | NO | b) Are these accreditation standards consistent with what is normally found in reputable accrediting associations of professional caliber? |
| YES | NO | c) Does the accreditation handbook (or other publications submitted) evidence that the accrediting association includes the following elements in its accreditation process:
(1) Standards, (2) Self-Study, (3) Site Visit, (4) Publication, and (5) Reevaluation? |
| YES | NO | d) Are all accreditation procedures appropriate to the needs of the constituency served and able to accomplish the purposes and priorities of the accrediting association? |
| YES | NO | e) Do all accreditation procedures appear to be comparable with accepted practices of professional accrediting associations? |

OTHER COMMENTS:

Reviewer

Date

APPENDIX B

NCPSA Checklists

CHECKLIST E1:	Contents of the Self-Study Notebook*
CHECKLIST F1:	For Use in Visits to Accrediting Association Headquarters*
CHECKLIST F2:	For Use in Visits to Accreditation Meetings*
CHECKLIST F3:	For Use in Observation of School Site Visits*

***The NCPSA Forms in Appendix B are available on CD. Contact the NCPSA office to order the "NCPSA Forms on CD."**

NCPSA SELF-STUDY CHECKLIST

CHECKLIST E1: CONTENTS OF THE SELF-STUDY NOTEBOOK

_____ Name of Accrediting Association	_____
_____ Address	_____ Phone
_____ Compiled by	_____ Date
_____ Reviewed by	_____ Date

GENERAL: A Self-Study notebook will be compiled in order to document that the association meets NCPSA standards and to serve as an instrument for self-improvement. The notebook itself will consist of a durable cover with sufficient space to hold the requested items. The name of the accrediting association will be located prominently on the outside front cover of the notebook.

Three (3) copies of the notebook (and all exhibits, including accreditation manuals) will be prepared and submitted to the Executive Director.

CHECKLIST: A copy of this checklist will be included in each notebook at the front of the contents. The first column, ITEM INCLUDED, will be completed by the applicant (accrediting association) and verified by the NCPSA reviewer. The second column, SUFFICIENT TO STANDARD, is to be completed ONLY by the NCPSA reviewer.

CONTENTS: All documentation and other materials will be secured within the notebook whenever possible. Items unable to be secured (e.g., bound publications) will be so noted within the appropriate section of the notebook and submitted with the notebook. The contents of the notebook will be divided into four major sections and tabbed with dividers:

- 1.0 DESCRIPTION OF ACCREDITING ASSOCIATION
- 2.0 ACCREDITATION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES OF THE ASSOCIATION
- 3.0 EDUCATIONAL AND ASSOCIATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS
- 4.0 GUIDELINES TO BE USED BY ASSOCIATIONS IN ACCREDITING PRIVATE SCHOOLS

Within these major sections, additional divider tabs will be added for each standard (e.g., 1.1 PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES, 1.2 SCOPE OF OPERATIONS). Documentation or other requested materials will be placed within each tabbed section and marked with the number and title of each standard on each exhibit.

The accrediting association will be asked to submit its accreditation manual and other pertinent publications. THE SUBMISSION OF THESE DOCUMENTS IN THEIR ENTIRETY ARE NOT TO SUBSTITUTE FOR INDIVIDUAL ENTRIES FOR EACH STANDARD which are necessary for a proper and complete review. The association will make a copy of the passage requested and place that copy in the notebook, noting the name and page number of the publication. The accrediting association is encouraged, whenever possible, to draw from its actual publications in response to NCPSA standards, even if not specifically requested.

CHECKLIST E1-0594

NCPSA SELF-STUDY CHECKLIST

CHECKLIST E1: CONTENTS OF THE SELF-STUDY NOTEBOOK

Name of Accrediting Association _____

Date _____

ITEM INCLUDED		SUFFICIENT TO STANDARD		1.0 DESCRIPTION OF ACCREDITING ASSOCIATION
Y	N	Y	N	1.1 PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES The purpose and objectives of the accrediting association as listed in existing publications or other materials (include name of publication and page number).
Y	N	Y	N	1.2 SCOPE OF OPERATION a) A written narrative describing the scope of current operations including descriptions of: (1.2.1) geographic area, (1.2.2) types and grade levels of schools, (1.2.3) description of accreditation and pre-accreditation status, (1.2.4) other programs and services, and (1.2.5) history. Include excerpts from current accrediting association publications or other materials whenever possible. b) A current, dated list of all schools participating in the accrediting program(s), by state, including names of schools, their addresses, and accreditation and pre-accreditation status levels or designations.
Y	N	Y	N	
Y	N	Y	N	1.3 RECOGNITION, MEMBERSHIPS, AND RELATIONSHIPS A written narrative describing recognition, membership, affiliation, or other relationship with any organizations, association, or other groups (including governmental agencies or department) as may be relevant, and the dates during which those relationships were active. (If there are none, it will be so stated.)
Y	N	Y	N	1.4 PUBLIC DISCLOSURES AND PUBLICATIONS a) A statement of the association's written policies and procedures regarding public information, brochures, handbooks, etc. and their cost to consumers. b) Sample materials and publications (e.g., brochures, publication statements, sample correspondence) that demonstrate the application of these policies and procedures.
Y	N	Y	N	
Y	N	Y	N	1.5 PERSONNEL a) A copy of the current Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws for the accrediting association. b) A list of all administrative personnel with their titles and qualifications, with an organizational chart of their administrative relationship. c) A governance chart along with names and addresses of all members of the Board of Directors with documentation regarding their qualifications. d) The names of any current elected or appointed representatives of its constituency who actively participate in the activities of the accrediting association; the title of office or description of responsibilities for each; the date during which the term of office for each expires. (This may include representation from the membership also.)
Y	N	Y	N	
Y	N	Y	N	
Y	N	Y	N	
Y	N	Y	N	1.6 FINANCIAL AND OTHER RESOURCES a) A financial statement of all income and expenses for the last complete fiscal year or a copy of the current financial audit. b) An annual budget for the upcoming fiscal year. c) A description of facilities INCLUDED to the accrediting association and their use.
Y	N	Y	N	
Y	N	Y	N	
COMMENTS:				

NCPSA SELF-STUDY CHECKLIST

CHECKLIST E1: CONTENTS OF THE SELF-STUDY NOTEBOOK

Name of Accrediting Association _____

Date _____

ITEM INCLUDED		SUFFICIENT TO STANDARD		
				2.0 ACCREDITATION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES OF THE ASSOCIATION
Y	N	Y	N	2.1 APPLICATION PROCESS
Y	N	Y	N	a) A copy of the application form and materials for the accreditation process.
Y	N	Y	N	b) A statement describing the policies and procedures relating to the applicant review process.
Y	N	Y	N	2.2 FUNCTIONS OF COMMISSIONS, COMMITTEES, ETC. A written description of commission(s), committee(s), panels(s), etc. involved in the review and accreditation process of the association with the organizational structure and functions; qualifications of members should also be stated.
Y	N	Y	N	2.3 TRAINING AND PARTICIPATION OF MEMBERS
Y	N	Y	N	a) A description of the participation of member schools in the accreditation process.
Y	N	Y	N	b) Training requirements and opportunities for these participants.
Y	N	Y	N	2.4 SELF-STUDY
Y	N	Y	N	a) A copy of the procedures related to the Self-Study.
Y	N	Y	N	b) A description of the personnel, with their qualifications, involved in the preparation of the Self-Study.
Y	N	Y	N	2.5 SITE VISIT A written description of Site visit procedures and requirements including the selection and training of Site Visit personnel.
Y	N	Y	N	2.6 REVIEW AND ACCREDITATION A description of the accreditation review process (all schools); a statement as to the review and accreditation procedures.
Y	N	Y	N	2.7 APPEAL AND COMPLAINT PROCEDURES A copy of the appeal and complaint procedures (for member schools and general public).
Y	N	Y	N	2.8 NONDISCRIMINATION POLICIES A copy of the nondiscrimination statement of the accrediting association.
Y	N	Y	N	2.9 REVIEW OF STANDARDS A description of the review process for accreditation standards (including participants and their qualifications).
Y	N	Y	N	2.10 CONFLICTS OF INTEREST A copy of policies and procedures related to conflict of interest within the association.
COMMENTS:				

NCPSA SELF-STUDY CHECKLIST

CHECKLIST E1: CONTENTS OF THE SELF-STUDY NOTEBOOK

Name of Accrediting Association				Date
ITEM INCLUDED		SUFFICIENT TO STANDARD		
3.0 EDUCATIONAL AND ASSOCIATION EFFECTIVENESS				
Y	N	Y	N	3.1 EFFECTIVENESS OF PURPOSES AND OBJECTIVES Written evidence that the association's purposes and objectives are being met.
Y	N	Y	N	3.2 PLANNING A strategic planning outline for the association for at least three (3) years from the date of submission of the self-study notebook. Current and projected information will be included, by year, for each of the following areas: (1) membership, (2) program and services offered, (3) staffing, (4) finances (including estimated budgets), and (6) other consideration.
Y	N	Y	N	3.3 ACCREDITATION MANUAL, MATERIALS, AND TRAINING a) Written evidence of the effectiveness of the standards and procedures of the association.
Y	N	Y	N	b) Written statement as to the effectiveness of training programs and the number of participants (including handbooks and samples of any training materials).
Y	N	Y	N	3.4 ANNUAL OR PERIODIC REPORTS a) A copy of the annual or periodic report form for accredited and pre-accredited schools.
Y	N	Y	N	b) Policies and procedures related to the implementation and review of annual or periodic reports for accredited and pre-accredited schools.
Y	N	Y	N	3.5 REEVALUATION Policies and procedures related to the reevaluation process for accredited schools within the association.
Y	N	Y	N	3.6 DOCUMENTATION AND RECORDS A list of the required documentation that is maintained on file by the association for all pre-accredited and accredited schools. (Cite the policies and procedures regarding submission and review of this documentation.)
Y	N	Y	N	3.7 SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE Policies and procedures related to the reporting of substantive change.
COMMENTS:				

NCPSA SELF-STUDY CHECKLIST

CHECKLIST E1: CONTENTS OF THE SELF-STUDY NOTEBOOK

Name of Accrediting Association				Date
ITEM INCLUDED		SUFFICIENT TO STANDARD		4.0 GUIDELINES TO BE USED BY ASSOCIATIONS IN ACCREDITING PRIVATE SCHOOLS
Y	N	Y	N	A COPY OF THE CURRENT ACCREDITATION MANUAL.
Y	N	Y	N	4.1 MISSION AND PURPOSE A copy of the accreditation standard(s) or other requirement(s) relating to school mission and/or purpose, including provisions for (4.1.1) goals and (4.1.2) philosophy.
Y	N	Y	N	4.2 ADMINISTRATIVE AND LEGAL OPERATIONS A copy of the accreditation standard(s) or other requirement(s) relating to administrative and legal operations of the school including (4.2.1) statement of nondiscrimination, (4.2.2) organizational structure, (4.2.3) attention to federal, state, and local regulations, and (4.2.4) strategic and master planning.
Y	N	Y	N	4.3 FISCAL MANAGEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY A copy of the accreditation standard(s) or other requirement(s) relating to the fiscal management and accountability of the school including attention to (4.3.1) budget, (4.3.2) tuition and fees/refund policy, (4.3.3) reporting and records, and (4.3.4) resource development.
Y	N	Y	N	4.4 PERSONNEL A copy of the accreditation standard(s) or other requirement(s) relating to school personnel (qualifications, conditions of employment, etc) including (4.4.1) administration, (4.4.2) faculty, (4.4.3) support staff, (4.4.4) employment policies and procedures, and (4.4.5) personnel records.
Y	N	Y	N	4.5 STUDENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES A copy of the accreditation standard(s) or other requirement(s) relating to student policies and procedures including (4.5.1) admissions, (4.5.2) student supervision and discipline, (4.5.3) student safety and access, (4.5.4) assessment of student performance/grading, and (4.5.5) student records.
Y	N	Y	N	4.6 CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM A copy of the accreditation standard(s) or other requirement(s) relating to the school curriculum and instructional program including (4.6.1) academic calendar and attendance policies, (4.6.2) description of programs, (4.6.3) curriculum materials and methodology, and (4.6.4) program evaluation, effectiveness, and improvement.
Y	N	Y	N	4.7 FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT A copy of the accreditation standard(s) or other requirement(s) relating to school facilities and equipment including provisions for (4.7.1) safety and maintenance of facilities and equipment, (4.7.2) instructional materials and equipment, and (4.7.3) library/media center.
Y	N	Y	N	4.8 STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES A copy of the accreditation standard(s) or other requirement(s) relating to student support services.
Y	N	Y	N	4.9 ADVERTISING AND PUBLICATIONS A copy of the accreditation standard(s) or other requirement(s) relating to school advertising and publications including (4.9.1) legal and ethical considerations, (4.9.2) statement of accreditation status, and (4.9.3) school publications, correspondence, and materials.
COMMENTS:				

TO THE REVIEWER: Include any additional comments and observations below as may be appropriate, especially for those items marked as "N" (NO).

TO BE COMPLETED BY NCPSA

Received by

Date

Signature of NCPSA reviewer

Date

NCPSA

ASSOCIATION HEADQUARTERS SITE VISIT

CHECKLIST F1: FOR USE IN VISITS TO ACCREDITING ASSOCIATION HEADQUARTERS

<hr/>	
Name of Accrediting Association	
<hr/>	<hr/>
Address	Phone
<hr/>	<hr/>
Chief Administrative Officer	Title
<hr/>	<hr/>
Reviewed by	Date(s) of Site Visit
<hr/>	<hr/>

DIRECTIONS: The NCPSA reviewer conducting the Site Visit of the accrediting association headquarters will complete this form and submit it to the chairman of the Commission on Standards and Review.

In PART I, the NCPSA reviewer will conduct interviews with the chief administrative officer and selected staff members of the accrediting association. The reviewer will then prepare narrative responses to the questions in light of NCPSA standards and guidelines.

In PART II, the NCPSA reviewer will examine membership files, facilities, general files and other records, records of accreditation meetings and hearings, and financial records and briefly respond to the questions. The reviewer is encouraged to add comments and narrative descriptions as appropriate.

NCPSA

ASSOCIATION HEADQUARTERS SITE VISIT

CHECKLIST F1: FOR USE IN VISITS TO ACCREDITING ASSOCIATION HEADQUARTERS

Name of Accrediting Association

Date

INTERVIEWS WITH THE CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER AND OTHER STAFF, continued

5. Describe the adequacy of staffing and resources as it relates to the size and scope of activities of the association.

6. Describe any inconsistencies in the membership of the association.

NCPSA

ASSOCIATION HEADQUARTERS SITE VISIT

CHECKLIST F1: FOR USE IN VISITS TO ACCREDITING ASSOCIATION HEADQUARTERS

Name of Accrediting Association _____

Date _____

PART 11.

DIRECTIONS: Based on the direct review and examination in the following areas, the NCPSA reviewer will respond to the questions of this section as they may apply to NCPSA standards and guidelines. The reviewer is encouraged to make additional comments as may be appropriate especially if to items that are determined as being insufficient to NCPSA standards.

INFORMATION AVAILABLE			SUFFICIENT TO STANDARD			EXAMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP FILES
Y	N	N/A	Y	N	N/A	1. Does the examination of the membership files indicate that the association has appropriately represented its scope of operations (1.2)?
Y	N	N/A	Y	N	N/A	2. Do the files indicate that the membership properly falls within the NCPSA parameters of geographic area (1.2.1) and types and grade levels of schools (1.2.2)?
Y	N	N/A	Y	N	N/A	3. Are the records maintained for applicants sufficient and do they attest to a professional application process (2.1)?
Y	N	N/A	Y	N	N/A	4. Is there indication in the files of initial review or other basic eligibility check accomplished for schools applying to the accreditation process (2.1)?
Y	N	N/A	Y	N	N/A	5. Do the files indicate that a Self-Study element has been appropriately implemented (2.4)?
Y	N	N/A	Y	N	N/A	6. Do the files indicate that a Site Visit element has been properly implemented (for initial accreditation and reevaluation) (2.5)?
Y	N	N/A	Y	N	N/A	7. Do the files attest that appeals (if any) have been handled responsibly, professionally, & according to established policy & procedures (2.7)?
Y	N	N/A	Y	N	N/A	8. Do the data in the membership files support the effectiveness of the accrediting association in fulfilling its purposes and objectives (3.1)?
Y	N	N/A	Y	N	N/A	9. Do the files attest that annual or periodic reports are being submitted from all fully accredited institutions (3.4)?
Y	N	N/A	Y	N	N/A	10. Do the files attest that annual or periodic reports provide, as a minimum, information regarding (1) statistical and demographic information and (2) substantive change (3.4, 3.7)?
Y	N	N/A	Y	N	N/A	11. Do the files indicate that the Reevaluation element (for fully accredited schools) has been implemented (3.5)?
Y	N	N/A	Y	N	N/A	12. Do the files appear to indicate that sufficient and appropriate documentation is submitted by individual schools at the time of their initial accreditation to attest to the quality of programs & operations (3.6)?
Y	N	N/A	Y	N	N/A	13. Do the records appear to be complete and current to all member schools (3.6)?
						14. Are the records kept orderly, secure, and accessible

		to appropriate staff (3.6)?
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NCPSA

ASSOCIATION HEADQUARTERS SITE VISIT

CHECKLIST F1: FOR USE IN VISITS TO ACCREDITING ASSOCIATION HEADQUARTERS

Name of Accrediting Association

Date

INFORMATION AVAILABLE			SUFFICIENT TO STANDARD			EXAMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP FILES
Y	N	N/A	Y	N	N/A	15. Do the records indicate that individual member schools are promptly and appropriately reporting substantive change (3.7)?
Y	N	N/A	Y	N	N/A	16. Do the records appear to indicate that all fully accredited schools have met all accreditation standards and other requirements (4.0)? If not, please explain any waivers, exemptions, or other situations below.

COMMENTS:

NCPSA

ASSOCIATION HEADQUARTERS SITE VISIT

CHECKLIST F1: FOR USE IN VISITS TO ACCREDITING ASSOCIATION HEADQUARTERS

Name of Accrediting Association

Date

INFORMATION AVAILABLE			SUFFICIENT TO STANDARD			INSPECTION OF HEADQUARTERS FACILITIES
Y	N	N/A	Y	N	N/A	17. Are the primary operations of the association being conducted at these facilities and within the United States (1.2.1)?
Y	N	N/A	Y	N	N/A	18. Are sufficient and appropriate facilities available for administrative and office requirements (1.6.2)?
Y	N	N/A	Y	N	N/A	19. Are sufficient and appropriate facilities available for the storage of necessary records and files (1.6.2)?
Y	N	N/A	Y	N	N/A	20. Are sufficient and appropriate facilities available for any special program or activity needs (1.6.2)?
Y	N	N/A	Y	N	N/A	21. Are sufficient and appropriate facilities available for any required meetings of the membership (1.6.2)?

COMMENTS:

NCPSA

ASSOCIATION HEADQUARTERS SITE VISIT

CHECKLIST F1: FOR USE IN VISITS TO ACCREDITING ASSOCIATION HEADQUARTERS

Name of Accrediting Association _____						Date _____
INFORMATION AVAILABLE			SUFFICIENT TO STANDARD			INSPECTION OF HEADQUARTERS FACILITIES
Y	N	N/A	Y	N	N/A	22. Do the files and records of the association attest to a history of stability, reliability, and commitment to an accreditation program of excellence (1.2.5)?
Y	N	N/A	Y	N	N/A	23. Do the files and records indicate that there are any affiliations, memberships, recognition, or other relationships held by the accrediting association supportive of its purposes and do not conflict with NCPSA purposes and imperatives (1.3)? Describe any such relationships below.
Y	N	N/A	Y	N	N/A	24. Do the files and records indicate that the association is responding properly to inquiries regarding its standards and procedures and the membership and status levels of its schools (1.4)?
Y	N	N/A	Y	N	N/A	25. Based on an examination of the Board of Director meeting agendas, minutes, and related correspondence, has the association provided for a legal and effective governing structure that is able to administer its operations (1.5.1)?
Y	N	N/A	Y	N	N/A	26. Based on an examination of the Board of Director meeting agendas, minutes, and related correspondence, is the leadership appropriately informed and involved in the planning strategies of the association (3.2)?
Y	N	N/A	Y	N	N/A	27. Is there evidence that opportunity has been provided for participation and/or input from the constituency (1.5.2)?
Y	N	N/A	Y	N	N/A	28. Is there evidence in the files and records that all reasonable complaints and inquiries regarding individual member schools are being handled responsibly and professionally (2.7)?
Y	N	N/A	Y	N	N/A	29. Are the records kept orderly, secure, and accessible to appropriate staff (3.6)?
COMMENTS:						

NCPSA

ASSOCIATION HEADQUARTERS SITE VISIT

CHECKLIST F1: FOR USE IN VISITS TO ACCREDITING ASSOCIATION HEADQUARTERS

Name of Accrediting Association						Date
INFORMATION AVAILABLE			SUFFICIENT TO STANDARD			RECORDS OF ACCREDITATION MEETINGS AND HEARING
Y	N	N/A	Y	N	N/A	30. Do the records attest that the accrediting association has implemented appropriate commission(s), committee(s), and panel(s) with proper functions in its review process (2.2)?
Y	N	N/A	Y	N	N/A	31. Do the records indicate that the Self-Study serves as a vital element in the review and recognition of member schools (2.4)?
Y	N	N/A	Y	N	N/A	32. Do the records indicate that the Site Visit serves as a vital element in the review and recognition of member schools (2.5)?
Y	N	N/A	Y	N	N/A	33. Is there evidence in the records of accreditation meetings and hearings that the professional review of all accredited and pre-accredited schools are being reviewed on a systematic and periodic basis (2.6)?
Y	N	N/A	Y	N	N/A	34. Does it appear in the records of the accreditation meetings and hearings that established accreditation standards and procedures, consistent with NCPSA guidelines and imperatives, serve the basis of an impartial review process (2.6)?
Y	N	N/A	Y	N	N/A	35. Do the records attest that any adverse decisions regarding termination or denial of accreditation are based on appropriate and verifiable reasons (2.6)?
Y	N	N/A	Y	N	N/A	36. Do the records of accreditation meetings and hearings indicate that periodic and appropriate review of accreditation standards are being accomplished in the association (2.9)?
Y	N	N/A	Y	N	N/A	37. Do the records of accreditation meetings and hearings indicate that appropriate personnel (including member schools) have input regarding the review of accreditation standards (2.9)?
Y	N	N/A	Y	N	N/A	38. Is there evidence in the records of the accreditation meetings and hearings that the review, recommendation, and rulings regarding individual member schools have been conducted free of conflicts of interest (2.9)?
Y	N	N/A	Y	N	N/A	39. Do the records of accreditation meetings and hearings support the effectiveness of the purposes and objectives of the association (3.1)?
Y	N	N/A	Y	N	N/A	40. Do the records indicate that the Reevaluation element has been appropriately implemented (3.5)?
Y	N	N/A	Y	N	N/A	41. Do the records indicate that documentation submitted by individual member schools in response to accreditation standards and other requirements is sufficient to the review process (3.6)?

		<p>42. Do the records indicate that documentation submitted by individual member schools in response to accreditation standards and other requirements is appropriately utilized in the review process (3.6)?</p>
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NCPSA

ASSOCIATION HEADQUARTERS SITE VISIT

CHECKLIST F1: FOR USE IN VISITS TO ACCREDITING ASSOCIATION HEADQUARTERS

Name of Accrediting Association

Date

INFORMATION AVAILABLE			SUFFICIENT TO STANDARD			RECORDS OF ACCREDITATION MEETINGS AND HEARING (continued)
Y	N	N/A	Y	N	N/A	43. Are the records kept orderly, secure, and accessible to appropriate staff (3.6)?
Y	N	N/A	Y	N	N/A	44. Do the records attest that accreditation standards are consistently and appropriately applied to all schools seeking full accreditation (4.0)? If not, explain any waivers or special situations below.

COMMENTS:

NCPSA

ASSOCIATION HEADQUARTERS SITE VISIT

CHECKLIST F1: FOR USE IN VISITS TO ACCREDITING ASSOCIATION HEADQUARTERS

Name of Accrediting Association _____						Date _____
INFORMATION AVAILABLE			SUFFICIENT TO STANDARD			EXAMINATION OF FINANCIAL RECORDS
Y	N	N/A	Y	N	N/A	45. Do the financial records indicate that the association has sufficient financial resources for its current operations, services, and other programs (1.5, 1.5.1)?
Y	N	N/A	Y	N	N/A	46. Has the association adequately projected its financial needs for future (short-term and long-term) and can reasonably be expected to meet those needs (1.6.1)?
Y	N	N/A	Y	N	N/A	47. Are the financial management and accounting strategies maintained with the highest standards of professionalism and integrity (1.6.1)?
Y	N	N/A	Y	N	N/A	48. Are the financial records appropriately and realistically incorporated in the planning strategies of the association (3.2)?
Y	N	N/A	Y	N	N/A	49. Are the records kept orderly, secure, and accessible to appropriate staff (3.6)?
<p>COMMENTS:</p>						

NCPSA

ASSOCIATION HEADQUARTERS SITE VISIT

CHECKLIST F1: FOR USE IN VISITS TO ACCREDITING ASSOCIATION HEADQUARTERS

Name of Accrediting Association

Date

PLEASE DISCUSS THOSE ITEMS RESPONDED TO WITH AN "N" AND, AS APPROPRIATE, "N/A," ESPECIALLY AS THEY IMPACT THE FULFILLING OF NCPSA STANDARDS AND IMPERATIVES.

Signature of NCPSA reviewer

Date

NCPSA

ASSOCIATION HEADQUARTERS SITE VISIT

CHECKLIST F2: FOR USE IN VISITS TO ACCREDITING ASSOCIATION HEADQUARTERS

<hr/>	
Name of Accrediting Association	
<hr/>	
Address	Phone
<hr/>	<hr/>
Chief Administrative Officer	Title
<hr/>	<hr/>
Reviewed by	Date(s) of Site Visit
<hr/>	<hr/>

DIRECTIONS: The NCPSA reviewer conducting the Site Visit of the accrediting association meeting will complete this form and submit it to the Chairman of the Commission on Standards and Review.

The Site Visit will be conducted during the time when the accrediting association makes its official decisions regarding accreditation status and membership. The NCPSA reviewer is also requested to observe and/or become acquainted with the review process leading up to the determination of accreditation status and membership.

The NCPSA reviewer is requested to observe the actual accreditation decision-making process and conduct such follow-up as may be necessary to thoroughly understand the process.

NCPSA ACCREDITATION MEETING SITE VISIT

CHECKLIST F2: FOR USE IN VISITS TO ACCREDITATION MEETINGS

Name of Accrediting Association

Date

OBSERVED		SUFFICIENT TO STANDARD			GENERAL
Y	N	Y	N	N/A	1. Based on observations of the accreditation meeting does the accrediting association appear to be effective in fulfilling its purposes and objectives (3.1)? Comment below.
Y	N	Y	N	N/A	2. Based on observations of the accreditation meeting does the accrediting association appear to be effective in promoting educational programs that are reputable, responsible, educationally sound, and consistent with its purposes and priorities (3.0)? Comment below.
Y	N	Y	N	N/A	3. Has the accrediting association established well-defined commission(s), committee(s), or panel(s) that participate in the review and recognition of schools (2.2)? Describe the effectiveness of their respective roles in the accreditation review and recognition process.

NCPSA ACCREDITATION MEETING SITE VISIT

CHECKLIST F2: FOR USE IN VISITS TO ACCREDITATION MEETINGS

Name of Accrediting Association

Date

OBSERVED		SUFFICIENT TO STANDARD			GENERAL (continued)
Y	N	Y	N	N/A	4. Describe the role (if any) of the current membership in the review and recognition process (2.3).
Y	N	Y	N	N/A	5. Are there sufficient and competent personnel available to fulfill the functions of the accreditation meeting (1.5)?
Y	N	Y	N	N/A	6. Are sufficient and appropriate facilities available for all related functions of the accreditation meeting (i.e., committee meetings, review sessions, etc.) (1.6.2)?

NCPSA ACCREDITATION MEETING SITE VISIT

CHECKLIST F2: FOR USE IN VISITS TO ACCREDITATION MEETINGS

Name of Accrediting Association _____

Date _____

OBSERVED		SUFFICIENT TO STANDARD			GENERAL (continued)
Y	N	Y	N	N/A	7. Is there provision at the accreditation meeting for grievances, complaints, and appeals to be presented, discussed, and resolved (2.7)? If so, please describe.
Y	N	Y	N	N/A	8. Describe any activities observed relative to the review of standards and the involvement of the membership in that process (2.9).

COMMENTS:

NCPSA ACCREDITATION MEETING SITE VISIT

CHECKLIST F2: FOR USE IN VISITS TO ACCREDITATION MEETINGS

Name of Accrediting Association _____

Date _____

OBSERVED			SUFFICIENT TO STANDARD			SELF-STUDY ELEMENT
Y	N	N/A	Y	N	N/A	9. Does the Self-Study element appear to serve an important function in decisions regarding accreditation (2.4)? Describe below.
Y	N	N/A	Y	N	N/A	10. Is there evidence that the results from the Self-Study are well-considered and reviewed before INITIAL accreditation is issued (2.4)? Please comment.
COMMENTS:						

NCPSA ACCREDITATION MEETING SITE VISIT

CHECKLIST F2: FOR USE IN VISITS TO ACCREDITATION MEETINGS

Name of Accrediting Association _____

Date _____

OBSERVED			SUFFICIENT TO STANDARD			SITE VISIT ELEMENT
Y	N	N/A	Y	N	N/A	11. Does the Site Visit element appear to serve an important function in decisions regarding accreditation (2.5)? Describe below.
Y	N	N/A	Y	N	N/A	12. Is there evidence that the results from the Site Visit are well-considered and reviewed before INITIAL accreditation is issued (2.5)? Please comment.
COMMENTS:						

NCPSA ACCREDITATION MEETING SITE VISIT

CHECKLIST F2: FOR USE IN VISITS TO ACCREDITATION MEETINGS

Name of Accrediting Association _____

Date _____

INFORMATION AVAILABLE			SUFFICIENT TO STANDARD			REEVALUATION ELEMENT
Y	N	N/A	Y	N	N/A	13. Does the reevaluation element appear to serve an important function in decisions regarding continuance of fully accredited schools (3.5)? Describe below.
Y	N	N/A	Y	N	N/A	14. Is there evidence that the results from the SELF-STUDY are well-considered and reviewed during the reevaluation process (2.4)?
Y	N	N/A	Y	N	N/A	15. Is there evidence that the results from the SITE VISIT are well-considered and reviewed during the reevaluation process (2.5)?

NCPSA ACCREDITATION MEETING SITE VISIT

CHECKLIST F2: FOR USE IN VISITS TO ACCREDITATION MEETINGS

Name of Accrediting Association _____

Date _____

OBSERVED			SUFFICIENT TO STANDARD			REEVALUATION ELEMENT (continued)
Y	N	N/A	Y	N	N/A	16. Is the fulfillment of accreditation standards an essential consideration in the reevaluation process (4.0)?
Y	N	N/A	Y	N	N/A	17. Do decisions regarding reevaluation appear to be based on the consistent and impartial use of the established accreditation standards and procedures (2.6)?
COMMENTS:						

NCPSA ACCREDITATION MEETING SITE VISIT

CHECKLIST F2: FOR USE IN VISITS TO ACCREDITATION MEETINGS

Name of Accrediting Association

Date

OBSERVED			SUFFICIENT TO STANDARD			REVIEW AND RECOGNITION PROCESS
Y	N	N/A	Y	N	N/A	18. As evidenced at the accreditation meeting, does the entire review process appear to be based on sound and effective policies and procedures (2.6)? Describe the elements of the review process observed during the accreditation meeting.
Y	N	N/A	Y	N	N/A	19. Are all pre-accredited and accredited schools being reviewed, to some extent, on a systematic and periodic basis (2.6)?
Y	N	N/A	Y	N	N/A	20. Does the documentation submitted by schools serve an important function in the review process (3.6)?
Y	N	N/A	Y	N	N/A	21. Are the documentation and other materials reviewed on each school sufficient to attest that standards and other requirements have been met (3.6)?
Y	N	N/A	Y	N	N/A	22. Is there evidence to indicate that a thorough and professional review of schools initially applying to the association is accomplished during the accreditation meeting (2.1)?
Y	N	N/A	Y	N	N/A	23. Is there evidence that the annual or periodic reports of fully accredited schools are appropriately reviewed by the association (3.4)?
Y	N	N/A	Y	N	N/A	24. Does the review process appear to support appropriate application of nondiscrimination policies (2.8)?

NCPSA ACCREDITATION MEETING SITE VISIT

CHECKLIST F2: FOR USE IN VISITS TO ACCREDITATION MEETINGS

Name of Accrediting Association _____

Date _____

OBSERVED			SUFFICIENT TO STANDARD			REVIEW AND RECOGNITION PROCESS (continued)
Y	N	N/A	Y	N	N/A	25. Does review process appear to indicate that the association has taken sufficient precautions regarding inappropriate conflicts of interest (2.10)?
Y	N	N/A	Y	N	N/A	26. Is there evidence that all persons involved in conducting reviews at the accreditation meeting have received sufficient training for their responsibilities (2.3)?
Y	N	N/A	Y	N	N/A	27. Does it appear that accreditation standards and other requirements are completely and consistently applied to all schools (2.6, 4.0)? Describe any waivers, exemptions, or other discrepancies observed.
Y	N	N/A	Y	N	N/A	28. Do any adverse decisions (e.g., termination, denial of accreditation) appear to be based on appropriate and verifiable reasons? Describe any such adverse decisions observed.
COMMENTS:						

PLEASE DISCUSS THOSE ITEMS RESPONDED TO WITH AN "N" AND, AS APPROPRIATE, "N/A," ESPECIALLY AS THEY IMPACT THE FULFILLING OF NCPSA STANDARDS AND IMPERATIVES.

Signature of NCPSA reviewer

Date

NCPSA ACCREDITATION MEETING SITE VISIT

CHECKLIST F3: FOR USE IN OBSERVATION OF SCHOOL SITE VISITS

<hr/>	
Name of Accrediting Association	
<hr/>	
Address	Phone
<hr/>	<hr/>
Chief Administrative Officer	Title
<hr/>	<hr/>
Name of School	Location
<hr/>	<hr/>
Reviewed by	Date(s) of Site Visit
<hr/>	<hr/>

DIRECTIONS: The NCPSA reviewer conducting a school Site Visit of the accrediting association will complete this form and submit it to the chairman of the Commission on Standards and Review.

The NCPSA reviewer is requested to observe the Site Visit team, which was sent by the accrediting association in its group meetings as well as selected individual assignments. The reviewer is also encouraged to conduct appropriate interviews with the Site Visit team members as well as selected school personnel that may help give a better understanding of the activities and results of the Site Visit conducted by the accrediting association.

NCPSA ACCREDITATION MEETING SITE VISIT

CHECKLIST F3: FOR USE IN OBSERVATION OF SCHOOL SITE VISITS

Name of Accrediting Association _____

Date _____

OBSERVED			SUFFICIENT TO STANDARD			
Y	N	N/A	Y	N	N/A	1. What evidence is there that site team members are appropriately qualified and that valid criteria is used in their selection (2.5)?
Y	N	N/A	Y	N	N/A	2. Is there evidence that Site Visit personnel are adequately trained for their responsibilities (2.3)? Describe below.
Y	N	N/A	Y	N	N/A	3. What evidence is there that the activities and results of the Site Visit are directed to promoting an educational program that is credible, effective, and educationally sound (3.0)? Comment below.

NCPSA ACCREDITATION MEETING SITE VISIT

CHECKLIST F3: FOR USE IN OBSERVATION OF SCHOOL SITE VISITS

Name of Accrediting Association

Date

OBSERVED			SUFFICIENT TO STANDARD			
Y	N	N/A	Y	N	N/A	4. Do the activities of the Site Visit serve to investigate and verify the documentation submitted for the Self-Study as well as other basic information on the school (2.5)? Discuss below.
Y	N	N/A	Y	N	N/A	5. Is the fulfillment of accreditation standards an essential element of the on-site review (4.0)?
Y	N	N/A	Y	N	N/A	6. Is there evidence that the documentation from the Self-Study is reviewed and utilized in the Site Visit (2.5)?
Y	N	N/A	Y	N	N/A	7. Are the activities and procedures of this Site Visit consistent with the accreditation procedures reports by the association (2.0)?

NCPSA ACCREDITATION MEETING SITE VISIT

CHECKLIST F3: FOR USE IN OBSERVATION OF SCHOOL SITE VISITS

Name of Accrediting Association _____

Date _____

OBSERVED			SUFFICIENT TO STANDARD			
Y	N	N/A	Y	N	N/A	8. Is there opportunity for the site team to provide input for overall school improvement (2.5)? Comment below.
Y	N	N/A	Y	N	N/A	9. Does this Site Visit indicate a level of effectiveness and professionalism consistent with a quality accreditation program (4.0)? Please describe.

PART II.

DIRECTIONS: Answer the following. Include sufficient detail to provide an appropriate understanding of the process.

1. Briefly describe the Site Visit schedule, activities conducted, and areas observed and investigated. Include site team meetings as well as individual activities. Comment on the overall effectiveness of the Site Visit activities observed.
2. Comment on how the final report of the Site Visit is prepared and reported to the school and to the accrediting association. Include any comments regarding the appropriateness of the reporting procedure.

3. Describe provision provided for school response to the findings of the Site Visit during and/or after the Site Visit.

4. OTHER COMMENTS:

Signature of NCPSA reviewer

Date