

SECTION 2

STANDARDS

To be granted ACCS accreditation subsequent to meeting the requirements for approval as a Candidate for Accreditation, a school must demonstrate that it has successfully met the following Criteria for Accreditation and that it can reasonably be expected to continue to meet these standards.

A. Mission, Vision and Planning. The school must show evidence that it is and has been meeting its published school mission and goals, that its vision is consistent with the ACCS, and that it engages in a planning process.

A.I. Classical Christian Commitment: The school must demonstrate that it promotes itself as a classical Christian school, has a mission and vision statement, a statement of faith, that school programs incorporate these statements, and that it serves the cause of Christ consonant with the distinctives of ACCS.

- a. Principle: A school must publish its mission and vision statement and statement of faith to inform parents of what the school is all about and for a degree of public accountability. This ensures that a) the school has drafted mission and vision statements and a statement of faith, and b) that the school is following each and all are consistent with those of ACCS.
- e. Indicators:
 - i. “Classical Christian” is prominent on the school's website and in its marketing materials.
 - ii. “Preparatory school” language, if used, is clarified to emphasize a classical Christian priority.
 - iii. Language in school documents that defines marriage, gender, and human sexuality according to historical biblical understanding.
- e. Documentation: All must be published.
 - i. Mission Statement
 - ii. Vision Statement
 - iii. Statement of Faith (must include a definition of marriage and gender)
 - iv. Explanation in the self study must describe how Scripture is integrated into school programs and curriculum

A.2. Strategic planning: The school board has a mid-term and long-range plan for the overall improvement of the school.

- a. Principle: The school must have a board-developed and approved long-range plan in place that addresses future improvements in the school and which takes into account the facility and grounds, growing financial resources, curricular reviews, the effectiveness of the faculty to teach in a classical Christian method and the application of the Seven Laws of Teaching, constituent support and community outreach, tuition, salaries, and enrollment, among other needs of the school.
- e. Indicators:
 - i. The plan provides detail about who is responsible for different aspects and specifies timelines and targets.
 - ii. The plan covers a term of five years into the future.
- e. Documentation:
 - i. School's mid- and long-range plan
 - ii. Notes explaining how the plan was developed and how it is currently being used by the board and administration

B. Accountability, Independence, and Stability. The school must demonstrate these qualities in several areas.

B.1. Financial Stability: The school must be able to document general stability with respect to financial resources and continuing constituent support for the school mission.

- a. Principle: ACCS wants to accredit a school that is viable. A school that demonstrates stability/growth, over time, in the areas listed above can generally be expected to continue to thrive in its operation.
- e. Indicators:
 - i. Accredited schools typically receive at least 80% of their income from student tuition.
- e. Documentation will show:
 - i. Annual budget (showing year to-date income and expenditures)
 - ii. Profit and loss statements for the past three to five years
 - iii. Note: Comments should explain whether or not a school is borrowing income from the following year to meet current year obligations.

B.2. Financial Independence: The school's financial support must not create an environment where a single donor (or a single external funding source) has the potential to threaten the future operation of the school by withdrawing support, or attaching new guidelines to funding that would threaten the school's mission. Similarly, if any single financial source through a third-party scholarship program or para-government organization represents a significant portion of the school's budget, it must not encumber or threaten the mission of the school.

- a. Principle: As previously stated, ACCS wants to accredit a school that is viable. The school must disclose its financial support and explain how these resources make the school viable in the long term. Also, the ACCS accredits schools that are independent and at which the board of directors can act without outside coercion, in the interest of the stated mission of the school.
- e. Indicators:
 - i. Any donor or funding source controlled by a single entity, government, or person that makes up more than 20% of the operating budget.
 - ii. A clear, documented, and specific financial plan, should a single funding source be lost.
 - iii. A reserve fund equal to 10% of the annual operating budget.
- e. Documentation should include:
 - i. Anonymous list of donor contributions
 - ii. Budget that shows the total amount of donations relative to total budgeted revenue
 - iii. Report showing financial support and/or in-kind gifts from its constituency (which may include products and/or services) to the school, as well as all situations where any individual (or external source) contributes a significant portion of the budgeted school income per year
 - iv. An explanation of these financial arrangements and what they mean to the school

B.2.a States with universal tuition support (e.g., Educational Savings Accounts (ESAs) or vouchers): These revisions apply to schools located in states that provide a significant amount of financial support to parents for use in private school education. Particularly programs that are not restricted to low-income families. Revenue from these sources may exceed 20% of a school's budgeted tuition income.

- a. Principle: While ACCS is thankful that ESAs and vouchers make private school tuition more affordable, we view the state funding of tuition as much of a threat as an opportunity. We are concerned that these funding programs may prove to be a modern Trojan horse. As noted in standard B.1., accredited schools must be financially stable, and many schools may not be stable if they reject all participation in these programs. Short-term stability may require significant involvement in these programs, however, we believe long-term stability requires measures to mitigate against the potential loss of these funds.
- e. Indicators
 - i. Schools take steps to mitigate against the potential loss of these funds and remain positioned to end participation in these programs to ensure faithfulness to the school's mission. Steps might include any of all of the following measures:
 - 1. Schools limit receipt of these funds to a set percentage of budgeted revenue.
 - 2. Schools allocate some funds to establish a reserve fund.

3. Schools limit the amount of available funds that they will accept per student below the state allocation to ensure that parents are responsible for at least part of the student's tuition
- ii. Schools establish a reserve fund to be used if participation in these programs threatens the school's mission. The amount of the reserve fund sufficient to keep the school operating for a time absent state funds.]
- e. Documentation should include:
 - i. Board-approved policy or guidelines that describe the board's rationale for the school's participation in ESA programs.
 - ii. Documents that describe the board's plans to mitigate against the potential loss of this funding.
 - iii. Budget that shows the total amount of ESA revenue relative to total budgeted revenue.
 - iv. Financial plans to be followed if the school must cease receipt of these state funds.
 - v. Examples of how the school communicates to parents about participation in these funding programs.
 - vi. Language submitted when applying for participation in the program expressing the school's right to operate according to their religious beliefs. (ACCS has sample language from ADF for schools to review.)

B.3. Outside Influence: The original voucher policy was reviewed given new instruments for government funding models, including those that offer private vehicles with strings attached. Voucher Policy 5.09 was replaced with Outside Influence Policy 5.10.

- a. Principle: ACCS-accredited schools may not accept funds if the school is required to sign an agreement with the government or an outside organization to access the funding if that agreement creates a future obligation, or, if by statute, accessing the fund obligates the school to future obligations by the state or another agency besides the ACCS. In other words, if the school stops accepting the funding, any strings must immediately be severed.
- e. Indicators:
 - i. ACCS-accredited schools may not accept funds that create future obligations. All obligations must end when the school stops accepting such funds.
 - ii. ACCS may refer to "The ABCs of School Choice," published by EdChoice, to help evaluate the specific requirements of an outside funding source.
- e. Documentation shall include:
 - i. School policies or written statements (if any) that address acceptance of outside funding
 - ii. A list of outside funding sources, government or private, along with an explanation of obligations required to receive these funds.
 - iii. Financial document that shows source(s) of tuition revenue

- B.4. Financial Accountability:** The school must provide a financial accountability report verified by an independent accounting source.
- a. Principle: ACCS believes schools should operate with a high level of financial accountability. We also recognize that a formal “accounting audit” may be excessive and expensive for the required purpose. Therefore, at a minimum, an examination by an independent, qualified person, whether an accountant or bookkeeper not directly associated with the school, provides an objective look at how the school conducts its financial business internally. This type of accounting review is sufficient.
 - e. Indicators:
 - i. An “independent, qualified person” may make recommendations to the school regarding how to improve its financial operations.
 - ii. The Financial Integrity Requirements (See Appendix B) provide the basis for this review.
 - e. Documentation:
 - i. Include responses to the questions in the Financial Integrity Requirements provided separately.
 - ii. A CPA may not be the best source to complete this report. A person knowledgeable about business financial management and who is independent of the school will suffice.
- B.5. Public Perception:** The school must have been free of public ethical scandal or have taken appropriate action in resolving the same.
- a. Principle: ACCS does not want to represent as “accredited” a school that has an unresolved public ethical scandal. The operative word is “unresolved.” We all live in a sinful world, and so sin at some point is not improbable for even an accredited school. The issue is how it is dealt with if it should occur.
 - e. Indicator:
 - i. Any major conflict has been resolved, insofar as it depends on the member school within the boundaries of its mission and governance, at the time of application and accreditation.
 - e. Documentation will provide:
 - i. A statement printed on school letterhead signed by the head of school or board chairman
- B.6. Enrollment and Employment Stability:** The school must disclose data for the past five years in the following areas along with an explanation of the trends and what they mean for the school: student enrollment and retention rates; retention of school administrators; teacher retention rate (year by year). Employee attrition and retention must indicate stability and support for the school mission.
- a. Principle: Total enrollment numbers for stable schools are generally consistent over time. However, stable schools sometimes see a decline in enrollment for a short time, for reasons related to maintaining faithfulness to the school's founding mission and vision. In such cases, schools should explain the reasons for such a decline.

- e. Indicators:
 - i. Actual student enrollment numbers will equal budgeted student enrollment numbers.
 - ii. Student retention rates are greater than 80%. Use this formula: number of students who left the school between September 30th of the prior year and September 30th of the current year, not including graduates, as a percentage of the current year's overall enrollment.
 - iii. Student enrollment should not show an overall year-to-year decline of more than 10%.
- e. Documentation will include:
 - i. Enrollment numbers for the past five years showing grammar enrollment, secondary enrollment, and total enrollment
 - ii. Teacher retention rate for the past five years
 - iii. Administrator retention rate for the past five years

C. Governance and Administration. The school must have established adequate structures and procedures for governance and administration to achieve its mission.

C.1. Constitutional Organization: The school must have a written constitution and/or bylaws that clearly and comprehensively provide a basis for school administration and governance; lines of authority and areas of responsibility must be explicit.

- a. Principle: A school must know the reason for its existence, how it is structured, and the lines of authority so that it can operate smoothly and consistently. The adoption and publication of these standards help develop a trusting relationship between the school and both parents and the local community.

- e. Indicators:
 - i. Members of the staff are aware of the limits and extent of their decision-making authority.

- e. Documentation:
 - i. School by-laws or similar documents must be included.
 - ii. Notes should explain the governance structure of the school. Also, identify specific sections of the by-laws that define items included in this standard.

C.2. Board Governance: The school must have a board of control that determines policy in the areas of administration, business management, academic affairs, and student life, as evidenced by a single, comprehensive policy manual. The board shall ensure that it manages conflict of interest issues in its own composition and its oversight of the school.

- a. Principle: "Board members are the fiduciaries who steer the organization towards a sustainable future by adopting sound, ethical, and legal governance and financial management policies, as well as by making sure the nonprofit has adequate resources to advance its mission" (National Council of

Nonprofits). Regardless of the governance model used at the school, boards must demonstrate a focus on these duties as opposed to spending time on the day-to-day operations of the school. This requirement does not preclude conflict of interest issues for board members, but does require that there be a mechanism for managing conflict of interest issues.

e. Indicators:

- i. The policy manual is referenced and understood by members of the administrative team. In other words, it is demonstrated that the manual is not a “dust collector,” but is actually used.

e. Documentation:

- i. Policy manual (or other governance documents)
- ii. Board minutes from the last 6 to 12 months
- iii. Identify the location for the conflict of interest policy. See the sample Conflict of Interest policy at the National Council of Nonprofits website.)
- iv. Notes should explain where all policies exist, i.e., is there a separate policy manual or do policies exist in handbooks? If policies are in the faculty or parent-student handbook, include them as well. Identify the specific sections in these documents that address items in this standard.

C.3. Board of Directors: Board members must meet ACCS and documented school standards for their office and must be able to articulate, at an appropriate level, the classical Christian vision for their school. The board must provide adequate training for all board members in classical Christian philosophy and school board practices common to long-term ACCS-accredited schools.

- a. Principle: Board members, collectively, are the guardians of the vision and success for the school. Classical Christian Education's paradigm challenges the common understanding of school to such a degree that vision drift is easy and common. For this reason, board members must be carefully selected and trained to understand, appreciate, and deeply support the foundations of the classical Christian vision.

e. Indicators:

- i. Board members sign a statement of faith and conflict of interest statement.
- ii. A training plan for board classical Christian philosophy and function is in place and practiced.
- iii. Board selection processes will require prospective members to learn and show that they understand classical Christian philosophy and pedagogy.
- iv. All board members are regularly engaged in learning, particularly about classical Christian education through demonstrated participation in ACCS conference attendance, selected readings in classical Christian education, webinar or onsite training, mentoring, conference recordings, attendance at parent education events, OR other training and development.

v. Annual improvement activities are conducted including board self-evaluations or readings on board best practices.

e. Documentation:

i. Policies regarding the qualifications, election, and training of board members will be included

C.4. Executive Leadership: The school's head administrator must have a clear job description, obviously act as the liaison between the board and staff, and be sufficiently available to the teachers for support and guidance. Schools must have a policy ensuring that the head of school receives an annual evaluation from the board. Boards must complete an annual evaluation for the head of school.

a. Principle: Just as Christ is the head of the Church, there was a chief priest in the Old Testament temple system, and as a husband is the head of a family, so too a school as an organization must follow this pattern with a single leader/representative as the head of school. He represents the school to the board, the board to the school, and the school to the community. He may have others to support and aid him in this task, but he is the leader of the entire school and accountable for its sound operation. He provides uniformity and consistency in the day-to-day operation of the school. A well-written job description protects both the administrator and the board.

e. Indicators:

i. Have a written set of attributes or virtues that are aspirational for the head of school position.

ii. Schools are expected to have one head administrator.

e. Documentation will show:

i. Head of school job description

ii. Document or policy outlining process for head of school's annual evaluation

iii. Note whether or not the head of school has received a formal evaluation from the board in each of the past five years (those completed evaluations should NOT be included in the self-study)

C.5. Conflict Resolution: The school must have constructed and promulgated biblical and public policies for resolving school conflicts concerning policies, administrators, faculty, and students.

a. Principle: Although not all possible situations can be anticipated, a general process for locally addressing conflicts at/within the school are mandatory because Jesus said that all men will know His disciples by how they treat one another in love. The Bible provides general guidelines for addressing/resolving conflict, and these need to be followed by those who are in submission to Christ. Where there are a large number of people, there will be sin. Schools must prepare for inevitable conflicts and develop principled guidelines in anticipation of difficulties, not in reaction to them.

e. Indicators:

i. In general, policies should have conflict dealt with between the affected parties, and then bring in an appropriate chain of command if the grievance escalates.

- ii. Grievances found in the official record should show examples of the organizational adherence to these principles.
 - e. Documentation will include:
 - i. Policy Manual
 - ii. Faculty Handbook
 - iii. Parent-Student Handbook
 - iv. Notes that identify the location of the grievance policy in the handbooks
- C.6. Records:** The school must have complete, accurate, legible, and securely maintained records. These are to include board minutes, school personnel files, student files, and administrative reports.
- a. Principle: A school must be able to professionally document what it is doing as well as provide for the privacy of the people it is serving. Security is required for certain documents such as student records and teacher performance reports, while other documents are more public in nature such as board minutes (usually). The school must demonstrate its maturity and professionalism by providing adequate handling procedures for all records.
 - e. Indicators:
 - i. Show a record plan for electronic records that provides for security and backup.
 - ii. Files should demonstrate completeness, all documentation is in one location, and a standard organization for each type of file.
 - e. Documentation: This will be evaluated during the site visit.
 - i. Notes should identify where these records are stored. Visit committees will examine records for completeness and consistent organization.
 - ii. Notes should also identify any policy that defines general record retention policies.
- C.7. Health, Security, and Statutory Requirements:** The school must meet state and local health, safety, and security requirements as well as any state statutory requirements for operating a private school.
- a. Principle: The state, county, and municipal authorities have requirements for health and safety which, in general, are consistent with a biblical view of civil government, and ACCS desires to support these requirements when they are not in conflict with Scripture. Schools have a responsibility “in loco parentis” to provide for the physical well-being of students entrusted to their care.
 - e. Indicators:
 - i. How does the school comply with the state’s compulsory education law (for example, number of school days)?
 - e. Documentation:
 - i. Documentation should identify the state and local requirements for private schools.

- ii. Health: Note requirements and compliance with vaccination reporting. For example, if your school is required to do CPR or concussion training, please document this.
- iii. Safety: Include certificates from annual fire inspections or building inspections and any risk management reports.
- iv. Security: Show emergency management or disaster response plans and training.
- v. State laws: Demonstrate requirements and compliance with laws concerning length of the school year and other requirements specified by the state in which the school resides.

D. Cultivation of Student Virtue (II Peter 1:5–6, Phil 4:8) and the School Community. The school must recognize that its missional success is tied to a systemic school community, and that all aspects of the school’s operation should seek to bring about the cultivation of Christian virtue and living.

D.1. Admissions Process: The school must exercise family and student admissions and retention policies that are consistent with the school’s mission (missional or covenantal), and that support a biblical Christian ethos of the school.

- a. Principle: Schools are made up of students, faculty, and programs. Each plays a vital role in forming paideia in students. If families enroll that uphold values in juxtaposition with the school community, they will disrupt the school’s ethos. In other words, students will be in conflict over acceptance of what is taught, and what is present in the community. This is particularly evident with false values around LGBT inclusion or non-Christian enrollment (Mormon, Muslim).
- e. Indicators:
 - i. Careful admissions policies that screen students based on specific criteria are in place.
 - ii. The person responsible for family interviews can articulate the types of families the school admits and how he or she determines their qualification.
- e. Documentation should show:
 - i. Written admissions policies and guidelines that describe the school’s goals with respect to the religious makeup or the constituency of the school.
 - ii. Written admissions policies and guidelines that may include direction regarding unbelievers or those who openly practice non-biblical life choices.

D.2. Aesthetics: The school must apply appropriate aesthetic standards to its classrooms, hallways, facilities, programs, and staff.

- a. Principle: The standards of Truth, Goodness, and Beauty are humane, intertwined, and God-given. Students, faculty, and parents are influenced greatly by aesthetic standards. “Higher” rather than “vulgar” (low) standards help create a learning environment that depicts transcendence. Classical influences in art help to ground classical schools in the transcendent. While not the only “beautiful”

form of art, the classical forms of music, art, performance, and architecture are less likely to reflect modern false-values connected with individualistic expression.

- e. Indicators:
 - i. Schools should demonstrate the application of their educational philosophy through the school's decor.
 - ii. The Western canon of thought (writings and great books), literature, fine art, theater, and music are used in such a way as to build appreciation and affection for them.
 - iii. Important and classical works of great art are given prominent place and presence in the school environment. Older forms that were based in a pursuit of ideal truth, goodness, and beauty are elevated examples. Products of twentieth- and twenty-first-century art and music are rightly assessed and ordered in the school environment, with earlier art given more prominence. Modern works tend to be subjective and individualistic in nature.
- e. Documentation: This will primarily be evaluated during the on-site visit.
 - i. If the school has relevant documentation, such as an aesthetic vision or directions to teachers on classroom decor, that could be included here.
 - ii. Most curricular items will be included in the curriculum guide. A listing of example items not included in the curriculum guide such as theatrical plays, ambient music choices, or music chosen for chapel (or equivalent) will be helpful.

D.3. Habits and Manners: Habits, manners, and decorum of the students and staff should comport with Christian and Western tradition appropriate to the mission of the school.

- a. Principle: Schools help to transfer a way of life (Ephesians 6:4, Proverbs 22:6). Habits practiced from an early age often become part of a person's nature and often become common practice in a Christian community. One of the great educational errors of our age is the notion that education is merely information and skills transfer. Schools must work against this widely held pressure as they cultivate the soul to love truth, goodness, and beauty. Classical Christian education is concerned with the moral and spiritual training schools provide to students.
- e. Indicators:
 - i. Order and joy should be evident throughout the school community.
 - ii. Classroom and school-wide practices in manners and politeness should be evident.
 - iii. As appropriate, regular practices in prayer, song, and memory should be present in the school day.
 - iv. Student dress code and grooming standards should be documented, and consistent with the principles above.
- e. Documentation:

- i. Include examples of liturgical readings, hymns, or other sacred songs formally used in the community.
- ii. Policies or written expectations for students should include:
 - Habits /etiquette
 - Uniforms
 - Order
- iii. Observed joy. (This will be evaluated on site.)

D.4. Activities: Non-classroom activities are consistent with the school's vision for providing moral and spiritual training to students.

- a. Principle: Virtue formation requires that all school-sponsored events are aligned with the vision and mission of a classical school.
- e. Indicators:
 - i. How do your activities flow out of your mission and vision statements?
 - ii. Expectation for student behavior in activities is commensurate with expectations in the school.
 - iii. Spiritual qualifications, conduct, and discipleship practices for coaches are comparable to spiritual standards for teachers.
- e. Documentation will include:
 - i. Handbooks or guidelines for coaches or other supervisors of co-curricular activities
 - ii. Policies on students' participation in these activities
 - iii. Hiring policies for coaches, etc., or a list of qualifications for staff holding these positions

D.5. Discipline: The school has and adheres to adequate overall discipline and behavioral standards.

- a. Principle: The school must have a policy or policies that define how discipline is effectively established and consistently maintained at the school. It should be evident to visitors in the hallways and on the playground as well as in the classrooms. Schools must establish a well-ordered environment that facilitates instruction and learning. Students also learn many lessons by the manner in which discipline is handled at the school.
- e. Indicators:
 - i. Clearly communicated standards like postings, handbooks, etc.
 - ii. Environment of student respectfulness toward adults, and staff toward their respective authorities.
 - iii. Male/female students exercise appropriate discretion in their relationships.
- e. Documentation: The practical application will be observed during the on-site visit.
 - i. Notes should identify the policies related to student discipline in the policy manual, faculty manual, and parent-student handbook.

D.6. Male and Female Roles: The school encourages male/female roles that are consistent with biblical Christian virtues. Leadership is encouraged in different ways between boys and girls.

- a. Principle: “God created them male and female.” The distortions of our age often cause us to ignore important Christian distinctions in the virtues and the roles of men and women. Christians affirm the equality of the sexes, while rejecting the “sameness” of the sexes, either in nature or purpose. Part of cultivating virtue is to appropriate the right virtues and to help students live according to scriptural standards.
- e. Indicators:
 - i. Practice and training in manners, with male/female distinctive roles.
 - ii. Policies against ambiguous dress and/or other grooming styles that may promote ambiguous appearance among students.
 - iii. In sports or PE, boys and girls do not compete in ways that might encourage boys to be rough with girls.
 - iv. Events that focus on distinctives between the sexes, for example, protocol events, social events, etc.
- e. Documentation should include:
 - i. Examples of indicative policies in training, handbooks, communications, activities, or manuals
 - ii. Operational documents outlining the philosophy or practice for dances, dating, etc.

D.7. In Loco Parentis: Parents are the authority from which the school operates and must therefore work in concert with the school in educating their children.

- a. Principle: God calls parents, specifically fathers, to raise their children in the education of the Lord (Ephesians 6, Deuteronomy 6). As schools, our authority must therefore be delegated from the parents, not the state or the church.
- e. Indicators:
 - i. Fathers, in particular, are held to some account for addressing school-related concerns.
 - ii. Enrollment documents make this responsibility clear to parents.
 - iii. The school has policies that, by enrolling, parents are joining with the school and delegating authority. If they will not support key aspects of school policy, they are advised not to enroll.
- e. Documentation will show:
 - i. Public documents or communication stating the school’s in loco parentis position
 - ii. Communications to parents that educate them about the school’s mission, vision, and programs

E. Curriculum. The school must provide adequate classical Christian curriculum requirements to achieve its mission. The content and goals of the entire curriculum should be challenging and of high quality.

E.1. Academic Goals: The school must be able to document that its program is meeting its published goals for student achievement and advancement.

- a. Principle: Not only must a school publish what its goals are, but it must demonstrate in a concrete way that it is meeting those goals.
- e. Indicators:
 - i. Periodic worldview interviews with students
 - ii. Exit interviews of events with graduates
- e. Documentation will include:
 - i. Description of a graduate
 - ii. Results from parent surveys
 - iii. Do not include achievement test scores or high-school graduation requirements for this standard.

E.2. Program and Graduation Requirements: The complete school program inclusive of graduation requirements must be well-organized, realistic, and publicized in its entirety.

- a. Principle: Schools seeking accreditation should be able to address in detail what is required in the way of coursework, credits, and accomplishments for a student to graduate from their school. In addition, these criteria must be published where parents and others can readily find them, and they must be consistent with the ACCS mission and vision. By establishing graduation requirements, a school demonstrates that it has considered both the scope and the culmination of its academic program.
- e. Indicators:
 - i. A rhetorical thesis presentation required for every graduate (not specifically a senior thesis).
- e. Documentation will show:
 - i. Published high-school graduation requirements
 - ii. School profile
 - iii. Description of Diploma tracks. All ACCS-authorized diplomas must have requirements that meet ACCS academic standards. Certificates of completion are not considered diplomas.

E.3. Complete Curriculum: The school must provide adequate classical Christian curriculum requirements to achieve its mission. The content and goals of the entire curriculum should be challenging and of high quality. The entire curriculum must be documented in a clear and specific manner within the school's curriculum guide(s).

- a. Principle: The original Latin meaning of curriculum is “the course, the path, the road.” A school must know what it is teaching in each class at each grade level. This information is contained in the school's

curriculum guide(s). Curriculum guides demonstrate planning and are an effective means for the school to provide accountability for the content of classroom instruction.

- e. Indicators:
 - i. The curriculum guide must be a published document that has been approved by the proper authority at the school.
 - ii. Curriculum materials should be detailed enough to guide classroom instruction. This is most often accomplished through the inclusion of objectives, though not excessively.
 - iii. Good discussion questions are part of the written curriculum.
 - iv. A documented sequence over time is necessary to create pacing for teachers within the curriculum.
 - v. The objective of a lesson includes virtue development as well as knowledge and skill development. “The student will know” and “The student will be able to” are not the only, or even the primary, purpose of education.
- e. Documentation should include:
 - i. Curriculum guides for grammar and secondary school
 - ii. A document that shows all courses taught in the grammar and secondary schools
 - iii. One example of how the written curriculum for a particular course is designed to fulfill a part of the vision for graduating students

E.4. Academic Program Requirements: The academic program must require the following for all students:

E.4.A Phonics: For all schools in their elementary academic program, instruction in reading through use of phonics

- a. Principle: Teaching children how to pronounce new words is essential to developing reading skills. “English is a phonetic language, which a child can quickly learn to read if he or she is taught the sounds of the various letters or combinations of letters” (Wilson, *Recovering the Lost Tools of Learning*, p. 31). “Phonics involves matching the sounds of spoken English with individual letters or groups of letters. For example, the sound k can be spelled as c, k, ck or ch. Teaching children to blend the sounds of letters together helps them decode unfamiliar or unknown words by sounding them out. For example, when a child is taught the sounds for the letters t, p, a and s, they can start to build up the words: “tap”, “taps”, “pat”, “pats” and “sat” (National Literacy Trust).
- e. Indicators:
 - i. A phonics-based reading curriculum in K, 1st, and 2nd. However, some “sight words” consistent with phonics pedagogy are expected
 - ii. The absence of whole-word-based pedagogy in grammar school
- e. Documentation:

- i. Provide notes that identify the sections in the grammar curriculum guide that includes phonics instruction.

E.4.B Latin or Greek: At least four years of Latin or Greek instruction, with at least two years in the secondary (i.e., after sixth grade),

Note: A year is generally understood to be 120 hours of class time with an instructor over the course of an academic year, i.e., a Carnegie unit.

- a. Principle: For membership, ACCS requires that a school teach at least two years of Latin or ancient Greek. Because ACCS accreditation has a higher bar than membership, accredited schools must require a minimum of four years of either language, with at least two of those years after the sixth grade. Teaching these languages also helps students develop their writing skills and facilitates their participation in the “great conversation” of Western civilization.

e. Indicators:

- i. This refers to requirements for students attending the school K–12.

e. Documentation:

- i. Provide notes that identify the pages in the curriculum guides for the Latin courses. Notes should specify the number of days per week and the length of class periods for Latin courses.

E.4.C Logic and Rhetoric: For all schools in their secondary education, provide at least one year each of formal logic and formal rhetoric.

Note: A year is generally understood to be 120 hours of class time with an instructor over the course of an academic year, i.e., a Carnegie unit.

- a. Principle: Logic and rhetoric are two elements in the Trivium, and should influence the teaching methods throughout their respective phases. As specific courses, logic and rhetoric provide students with some of the most powerful tools of learning. These requirements reflect only the bare minimum for membership in ACCS.

e. Indicators:

- i. In addition to the time requirement cited here, it is expected that logical and rhetorical tools will be integrated into other courses. This standard presumes such integration; however, this standard requires discrete instruction in logic and rhetoric.

- ii. A rhetorical thesis presentation is required for every graduate (not specifically a senior thesis).

e. Documentation:

- i. Provide notes that identify the pages in the curriculum guides for the logic and rhetoric courses. Notes should specify the number of days per week and the length of class periods for logic and rhetoric courses.

- ii. High-school graduation requirements should address these courses.

E.4.D Western Civilization: Significant study in Western history and a canon of Western literature,

- a. Principle: Because history is the revelation of God's created order in time and on earth, and because the ACCS mission "is both to promote the classical approach, and provide accountability for member schools to ensure that our cultural heritage is not lost again," we require schools to teach children their Christian heritage which has developed predominantly through the West.
- e. Indicators:
 - i. Many schools have found benefit in using more primary sources than textbooks in the secondary.
 - ii. Children's literature used in the classroom represents the classical canon for children.
 - iii. The secondary school has students read a significant portion of the Western canon of works in translations as close to the original as practical.
 - iv. Socratic and ethical discourse are evident in the treatment of great texts.
 - v. The school's definition of the "Western Canon" is based in some accepted tradition (Harvard Classics, The Great Books of the Western World, generally accepted tradition, etc.)
- e. Documentation:
 - i. Notes should identify at least some of the areas in the curriculum guides that relate to these subjects. Notes should also describe when students receive training in these subjects.
 - ii. List the Western Canon texts read in grades 7–12.

E.4.E Writing: Training in writing (both prose and poetry), grammar, spelling, and composition

- a. Principle: Because ACCS wants graduates who are capable communicators, which includes their ability to write, this requirement is included and reflects the need for instruction at all levels of the Trivium, from the early grammar stage where students learn spelling and English grammar, to the rhetoric years where compositions are required. The rhetoric stage presumes that students now have independent thoughts and ideas and that these students must be taught to communicate eloquently and persuasively.
- e. Indicators:
 - i. Prose and poetry should be apparent at all stages of the Trivium in an age-appropriate format. (progymnasmata).
 - ii. Writing practices will incorporate logical defense and the classical rhetorical form (reference progymnasmata, Cicero, Quintilian).
- e. Documentation:
 - i. Notes should identify courses in the curriculum guides where students are taught to write poetry and prose. Also, remember to include student writing in the samples of student work.

E.4.F Bible: Training in the Scriptures should include and foster a well-integrated scriptural understanding of all subjects.

- a. Principle: ACCS is committed to the restoration of our Christian culture which is grounded on the Bible. It is necessary that ACCS schools have courses that study the Bible, but that by itself is not sufficient. As this standard indicates, biblical integration is essential.
- e. Indicators:
 - i. The Scriptures must permeate every course of instruction since all knowledge derives from Christ (Col. 2:3).
 - ii. Teachers take advantage of the natural opportunities in their lessons to integrate Scripture, while respecting the plain context of the scriptural passage. It is not expected that every lesson observed by the visit committee will include scriptural integration.
- e. Documentation: This will also be evaluated during the site visit.
 - i. Notes should identify courses where students receive training in the Scriptures. Also include information that tells what Bible reading students complete. Give examples of how the Scriptures are integrated into other subjects.

E.4.G Mathematics: Training is required in general mathematics, arithmetic, algebra, and geometry, at a minimum, with trigonometry offered, but not required.

- a. Principle: God is the source of order in the universe, and it is expected that proficiency with numbers is necessary for a graduate from an accredited ACCS school. Note that both arithmetic and geometry are liberal arts. While mathematical rigor is encouraged, the specific course selections should be consonant with the mission of the school.
- e. Indicators:
 - i. Students are required to complete through Algebra II and have an option to take a pre-calculus course.
 - ii. Math teachers understand the unique contribution of the quadrivium in its relationship to the classical liberal arts.
- e. Documentation:
 - i. Notes should identify courses where students receive training in math. Also provide an explanation as to what courses are required and what are elective courses.

E.4.H Science: Training in general science, biology, chemistry, and an opportunity to take physics, science instruction supports student's faith in Scripture.

- a. Principle: All order in creation derives from the Creator, and it is important to ensure students have a rudimentary understanding of how that creation is structured. These courses provide that rudimentary level of knowledge and understanding. Wherever practical, these subjects should be taught in a form consistent with natural philosophy and natural history, the classical tradition that orients the natural world to its relationship with the divine Creator's form and purpose.

- e. Indicators:
 - i. Students interviewed by the visit committee will demonstrate confidence in the truth of Scripture, especially as they express personal beliefs in creation.
 - ii. Scientism (the belief that the scientific method is the path to ultimate truth) is identified and refuted in favor of knowing God through His natural revelation.
- e. Documentation:
 - i. Notes should identify courses where students receive training in science. Also provide an explanation as to what courses are required and what are elective courses.
 - ii. Include policy or guidelines instructing teachers how to present creation.

E.4.I Theology:

- a. Principle: Historically, theology has been considered the “queen of the Sciences.” In other words, the study of God leads to all other knowledge. For this reason, classical Christian schools should train and teach either in the historic tradition of theology or in the narrower field of apologetics. Apologetics is instruction in how to give a defense of the Christian faith; it addresses the antithesis between Christ and all other religions, and how every thought needs to be brought captive to the lordship of Christ.
- e. Indicators:
 - i. Sound biblical and theological components are regular components of discussions in all subjects.
- e. Documentation:
 - i. Notes should identify the pages in the curriculum guide for the apologetics course **or training in theology**. Course objectives and textbook materials should also be included.

E.4.J.a Art: During the grammar and logic stages, the curriculum includes required instruction in the theory and practice of the visual arts. "Visual art" refers to drawing, painting, sculpture, etc. In the rhetoric stage, there are some required credits in fine arts (excluding music). "Fine arts" include the historic arts of painting, sculpture, architecture, and poetry, the performing arts of theatre and dance, and modern forms such as film, photography, and design. (Music, also a historic art, is addressed separately in standard E.4.J.b.)

- a. Principle: ACCS is committed to truth, beauty, and goodness. These traits are found in every course but are the very heart of this requirement. "Instruction in the arts" does not include art appreciation, which is considered "general instruction." Art appreciation is embedded or included throughout the Trivium.
- e. Indicators:
 - i. Grammar and logic school students receive instruction in visual arts.
 - ii. Rhetoric school students receive instruction in fine arts.
 - iii. High-school graduation requirements include required credits to ensure training in fine arts.

c. Documentation:

- i. Notes should identify visual arts training courses (not appreciation courses) required during the grammar and logic stage of the Trivium.
- ii. Class schedules for grammar school specials.
- iii. Identify relevant courses found in the curriculum guide.
- iv. Identify what elective choices logic and rhetoric students have.
- v. High-school graduation requirements.

E.4.J.b Music: During the grammar, logic, and rhetoric stages, the students receive required instruction in the theory and practice of the music. Music can be inclusive of instrumental or vocal training. Instruction does not have to be a class (however, students should show evidence of vocal training when they sing).

- a. Principle: ACCS is committed to truth, beauty, and goodness. These traits are found in every course but are the very heart of this requirement. "Instruction in the arts" does not include music appreciation, which is considered "general instruction." Music appreciation is embedded or included throughout the Trivium.

e. Indicators:

- i. Students receive instruction in music in grammar, logic, and rhetoric schools.

c. Documentation:

- i. Notes should identify the music training courses (not appreciation courses) required during each stage of the Trivium. Or, if not in a class, when students regularly sing or play.
- ii. Class schedules for grammar school specials.
- iii. Identify relevant courses found in the curriculum guide.
- iv. Identify what elective choices logic and rhetoric students have.
- v. High-school graduation requirements.

E.5. Academic Evaluation and Assessment: The academic program will be regularly evaluated by documented, annual administration of an appropriate, nationally recognized, standardized exam and other academic assessments that reflect classical pedagogy.

- a. Principle: ACCS wants an objective means for our schools to evaluate how they are doing in instructing their students. Again, this criterion does not require that students be tested at each grade level, but only that they be tested at some regular, but unspecified intervals. Assessment using humane, thought-oriented oral, written, and discourse methods is also desired.

e. Indicators:

- i. Testing assesses verbal and quantitative reasoning (sometimes called critical reading, math concepts, etc.) which are influenced by the classical method.

- ii. ACCS encourages schools to utilize the ERB CTP-5 standardized test but allows any of the others commonly available on the market, as long as the test does not direct the school's programs toward a state-standard like the Common Core.
- iii. The ACCS recommends the use of the Classic Learning Test wherever appropriate.
- e. Documentation:
 - i. Provide copies of class score reports as received from the testing service.
 - ii. Schools may also add their own internally created reports. If so, be sure to identify what scores are being reported and how results were calculated. Does the school have targets for student learning; if so, what scores are used to measure this growth?
 - iii. Most importantly, schools should explain how schools utilize test results. Is testing being conducted to appease parents? Are scores used to evaluate instruction, learning, or curriculum? Has the school completed an analysis to see how well the written curriculum, the taught curriculum, and the test curriculum match?

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

F.1. Faculty Requirements: The school must demonstrate that each of its faculty meets the school's written requirements for the position(s) that they hold.

- a. Principle: A school must have written requirements for hiring teachers which include either a specific job description or general standards of conduct, knowledge and teaching ability consistent with the subjects which the person has been hired to teach. These documents communicate that the school has considered what qualities are inherent in successful teachers and is thoughtfully applying these standards in hiring practices.
- e. Indicators:
 - i. ACCS-accredited schools have found greater success hiring inexperienced teachers who don't require re-training. A preference for hiring long-term public school teachers with experience suggests a lack of understanding of the distinctives of classical Christian pedagogy. It's very hard to successfully re-train a teacher.
 - ii. Teachers must be professing Christians who know the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior (John 3:3, 1 Peter 1:23). Staff must be in agreement with and adhere to the school's Statement of Faith as part of the qualifications for their position of employment.
- e. Documentation:

- i. Include updated documentation as provided with the application for candidacy status (list of teachers, academic degrees, and classes taught).
- ii. Show school's hiring policy (or documentation that defines qualifications to be a full-time teacher).
- iii. Notes and documentation should explain the school's policy and requirements for mandatory enrollment of children of full-time employees.
- iv. Notes should explain whether or not the school conducts criminal background checks on applicants.

F.2. Class Size: The school must show that its program for assigning teaching responsibilities and student-faculty ratio is consonant with its stated goals. ACCS expects schools to be consistent with their own policy. ACCS does not have a specified class size. Schools have adopted class sizes for enhanced marketing, for facility limitations, or for tradition. ACCS recognizes that the adopted class size has a direct correlation on teacher salaries.

- a. Principle: The school must have a policy that specifically defines how many students are assigned to a teacher. It is also important to note how many classes a teacher is assigned to teach each day, and what the allotted preparation time is for each class. The school wants to ensure that it is not running good teachers into the ground and as a consequence hampering student instruction.
- e. Indicators:
 - i. Overall student/teacher ratios for the school, maximum class size, and other limits on class size are published and followed.
- e. Documentation should indicate:
 - i. Policy on class size (or a published statement on class size used to market the school to prospective parents)
 - ii. Class rosters from the previous or current year
 - iii. Explain how many prep periods full-time grammar and secondary school teachers receive during the week

F.3. Books and Ad Fontes: An obvious love and respect for reading and books should be evident throughout the entire school's program. For example, there should be a wide variety of literature available to the students in classroom and/or school libraries.

- a. Principle: Christians are people of The Book. We put a high priority on the written word because God has done so in providing us with the Scriptures. There should be a visible emphasis placed on the importance of reading from the head administrator down, and on the quality and quantity of books available to students at each grade level.
- e. Indicators:
 - i. Books in the school's holdings are curated for quality.

- ii. Students have ready access to "Great Books," original source material, and reference texts.
- e. Documentation: This will be observed during the on-site visit.
 - i. If the school has a summer reading program, include descriptive information here.

F.4. Teacher Development: The school must have an established, ongoing teacher development program, which is consistent with the ACCS vision. This should include taking advantage of ACCS-approved conferences, training, audio/video recordings, and/or materials.

- a. Principle: Because what ACCS is doing has not been done for well over a century and a half, we are working to re-establish a classroom model that has been essentially expunged and for which none of us has any personal recollection. Teacher training is essential to help prepare teachers and hone their teaching skills for the classroom. This is an ongoing need, not a one-time event. Teachers need to be continually challenged to think in terms that are not common to their past experience and instruction outside of ACCS.
- e. Indicators:
 - i. Teachers are able to describe the training program and how they participate in it.
 - ii. The content of teacher training and development is unique to classical and/or Christian education.
- e. Documentation:
 - i. Show schedules from teacher training meetings provided during summer orientation programs as well as during the school year.
 - ii. Description of specific faculty training

F.5. Pedagogy: In order to lead students into maturity, teachers must practice effective pedagogy consistent with practices and principles securely rooted in the classical Christian tradition of instruction. Instructional planning and teaching should employ the following principles:

- a. Principle: ACCS accreditation places a high priority on assessing classroom instruction and student learning. True teachers do not merely dispense knowledge; they also inspire students to inquire and learn as they guide their students through a field of study. Gregory wrote, "True teaching is not that which gives knowledge, but that which stimulates pupils to gain it." The ACCS mission to "promote, establish, and equip member schools that are committed to a classical approach in the light of a Christian worldview" has been aided by the articulation and adherence to these principles of instruction. This list is representative, not exhaustive, of essential aspects of classical Christian pedagogy. In an accreditation review, site teams expect to see these principles in action, where they apply, as they observe classroom instruction. Team members understand that some of these principles do not naturally manifest in certain classroom interactions.
 - i. Teachers love their students, seeking their spiritual, intellectual, and physical good.
 - ii. Teachers capitalize on natural opportunities that arise within the lesson to integrate the lesson with Scripture.

- iii. Teachers frame lessons with purpose—that is, with an objective, goal, or learning target in view. Teachers also build into each lesson ways to assess the students' competency in order to ascertain whether that objective has been met. This assessment is observable in the students' own actions, expressions, or performances.
- iv. Teachers know the material they teach and offer a living example of competency with the material at hand.
- v. Teachers deploy language that students can understand, building from familiar to unfamiliar, with due attention to their maturity, experience, and prior knowledge.
- vi. Teachers enjoin students to attend to the material with interest and to participate earnestly in fruitful learning activities.
- vii. Teachers enjoin students to do the work of learning, requiring them to display their knowledge or skills in a manner that conduces to feedback, adjustment, correction, and encouragement.
- viii. Teachers leverage the fellowship within a classroom cohort to enjoin students to learn through one another.
- ix. Teachers revisit and review material to solidify what was learned previously and also to forge connections to new learning.
- x. In the younger grades, classroom methods emphasize the development and exercise of memory. Memorization should be an essential element of instruction in daily lessons.
- xi. Teachers incorporate age-appropriate pedagogy when instructing students in the younger grades. Such instruction aims to develop students' affections, preferences, and loyalties for truth, goodness, and beauty. It features stories, recitation, and songs and makes use of memory, imitation, experiences, and bodily activity.
- xii. Teachers incorporate age-appropriate pedagogy when instructing students in the middle grades. Such instruction aims to develop students' ability to analyze, make distinctions, draw inferences, solve increasingly complex problems, defend and refute positions, and build cohesive arguments. Instruction features classroom discussions in which students seek truth through dialogue; formulating and asking questions which further understanding; training in formal and respectful debate; writing assignments that require comparison, contrast, and analysis; and application of logic and knowledge.
- xiii. Teachers incorporate age-appropriate pedagogy when instructing students in the upper grades. Such instruction aims to foster the students' self-directed inquiry, industry, and creativity. It features discussions, presentations, and written compositions in which students formulate their own ideas and express them persuasively and in their own manner.
- xiv. Though certain tools of learning are emphasized at different stages, all student faculties should be developed throughout the curriculum. For example, rhetorical skills (delivery, projection,

eye contact, etc.) and critical reasoning are to be developed in all grades in age-appropriate ways, and students should continue to exercise and sharpen their memory in the upper grades.

b. Indicators: This list of indicators is representative, not exhaustive:

- i. Teachers exhibit delight to be in the company of their students. As opportunities arise, teachers stir students to godliness by encouragement, instruction, admonition, and correction.
- ii. Teachers call attention to scripture—naturally, with neither triteness or clumsy affectation.
- iii. Teachers identify a clear objective or learning target for each lesson. Teachers plan for and conduct frequent and involuntary checks for understanding during the lesson, and make adjustments tailored to the objective.
- iv. Teachers are well-prepared for the lesson and demonstrate competence in the subject.
- v. Teachers demonstrate an awareness of vocabulary, allusions, and ideas that may be new to students. Teachers adjust if students show signs of confusion or misunderstanding.
- vi. Teachers ask questions that elicit thoughtful answers (beyond a simple "yes" or "no"), so that students participate actively and show interest in the lesson.
- vii. Students are working rather than simply watching the teacher at work. Students communicate thoughts they have formulated for themselves—whether by working problems on the board, by discussing or debating, or other methods.
- viii. Students observe and react to one another in furtherance of the lesson. In discussion settings, students consider and respond to their classmates directly as they voice their own contributions, instead of the teacher rephrasing each comment.
- ix. Lessons include a review of prior material; such reviews are more than mere repetition, they forge new connections or applications
- x. Younger students practice memory by recalling and proclaiming what they have learned, especially at the beginning or end of lessons, during transitions between subjects, etc.
- xi. Younger students participate actively through bodily activity, song, and/or recitation.
- xii. Students in the middle grades practice logic (i.e., they define, compare, contrast, infer, and analyze) as they discuss, write, debate, and present.
- xiii. Students in the upper grades practice logic (see above) and rhetoric (i.e., they tailor their expression to audience and situation while attending to clarity and style) as they discuss, write, deliberate, and present.
- xiv. Teachers assess students in rhetorical, critical reasoning, and memory skills in age-appropriate ways across the curriculum.

e. Documentation:

Schools shall provide the following documentation. While such documentation attests to a school's compliance with this standard, more probative evidence of compliance arises from observations by the visit committee on site.

- i. Lesson plan forms indicating how teachers employ these principles in routine planning.
 - ii. Actual lesson plans prepared by teachers, plans that best exemplify what an administrator expects from teachers. Include a week's worth of lessons from each teacher selected, and the administrator shall select various teachers representing a range of grade levels and subjects.
 - iii. Classroom observation and teacher evaluation forms, indicating teachers receive routine feedback about their use of these principles.
 - iv. Training plans and past training records should include material consistent with ACCS accreditation standards for classroom teaching.
- e. Resources:

The principles informing this standard denote wisdom passed down to us by great educators through the ages. Many witnesses confirm these principles, some of which we identify here as resources useful for cultivating sound instructional practices in our schools. The contemporary renewal of classical Christian education emerged in the 1980s, and drew ideas from two key works: "The Lost Tools of Learning" by Dorothy Sayers, and *The Seven Laws of Teaching* by John Milton Gregory. Sayers' and Gregory's most fruitful ideas are reflected above in the Principles section of this standard. In addition, for a more complete grounding in the long history of classical and Christian pedagogy, we draw principles from a number of additional sources alongside Sayers and Gregory.

For general principles of pedagogy expressed in clear outline form, see Comenius, *The Great Didactic*, chs. 20-21 (which summarize the preceding chapters in this great work, which are excellent), as well as John Milton Gregory, *The Seven Laws of Teaching*. Johann Sturm discusses the specific exercises that comprise the daily work in schools in *For the Lauingen School*, "On Daily Exercises".

For principles regarding the relationship between teacher and student, see especially Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* II.2.5-8 and Augustine, *On Catechizing the Uninstructed*, ch 12. Another valuable source on the teacher-student relationship is Alcuin, *Disputatio Pippini* and *De Grammatica*.

In these writings Alcuin also highlights the virtuous, God-honoring ends to which teachers should direct all instruction, a key principle that others also address well, including Augustine, *De Doctrina Christiana*, books I-II; Hugh of St. Victor, *Didascalicon* books I-II; and Comenius, *Great Didactic* chapters 1-6. Sturm addresses the necessary character of the teacher in *Correct Opening of Elementary Schools of Letters*, "The Office of Teachers of Letters".

Christian educators have long recognized that teachers should adapt their instruction to the maturity of their students. In addition to Dorothy Sayers' "The Lost Tools of Learning," which has helpfully

shaped many classical schools, we draw from other important sources, including Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* I.1-II.10 and Comenius, *Great Didactic*, chs. 27-31. Sturm emphasizes the required training in memory in younger grades in *Correct Opening of Elementary Schools of Letters*, "Training the Memory."

For instruction unique to younger students, aimed at forming their intuitions, appetites, and habits, see again Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria*, book I; and also Plato, *Republic*, 400(e)-402(a); Aristotle, *Politics*, VII.5-6 (1339b.40-1340b.30); John Chrysostom, *An Address on Vainglory and the Right Way for Parents to Bring up their Children*, 16-90; and Boethius, *Fundamentals of Music*, I.1.

Dorothy Sayers has influenced many for the innovative way she connects rudimentary instruction to the art of grammar; for historical witnesses to the method of instruction in the arts, with special attention to grammar, see especially Hugh of St. Victor, *Didascalicon* book III; also valuable are John of Salisbury, *Metalogicon* I.24; Alcuin, *Disputatio Pippini*; Quintilian *Institutio Oratoria* I.4; and Piccolomini, *The Education of Boys*, 40-98.

Note also Marshall MacLuhan's superb exposition of the trivium in *The Classical Trivium*.

Many of the works cited above also address instruction tailored to older students, to which we also add Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* II.1-10 and book X; and Hugh of St. Victor, *Didascalicon* books V-VII.

F.6. Classroom Observation: The school shall have written procedures that describe regular and ongoing supervision and classroom observation of all teachers. Policies should require written year-end evaluations for every teacher.

- a. Principle: Regular and ongoing supervision of teachers is necessary to ensure teachers continue to teach classically.
- e. Indicators:
 - i. Completed faculty evaluations include items for teachers to improve on. Evaluations don't solely consist of praise and positive affirmations.
- e. Documentation should include:
 - i. Faculty Handbook, which shows policy addressing observation and supervision of teachers
 - ii. Job description of the administrator assigned these responsibilities
 - iii. Summary of specific faculty observations conducted during the previous year

G. Student Work Samples. The school must provide sample student work along with the self-study.

- a. Principle: This provides the visit committee with another means to evaluate the school.
- e. Documentation: Include scanned copies of student work in these areas:
 - i. Assignments that show instruction in phonics

- ii. Writing assignments from all levels, especially ones showing teacher corrections, including two from logic school and two from rhetoric school
- iii. Examples of poetry writing from all levels
- iv. Examples of tests from all levels
- v. Assignments from Latin
- vi. Assignments from logic
- vii. A senior thesis (from rhetoric)
- viii. Photos of student art work

H. Standards for Renewal Accreditation.

H.1. Teacher Certification: (Renewal Only) The school must provide a record of the implementation of the school's teacher certification plan and the status of each teacher in that plan. (See Appendix H, p. 64.)

- a. Principle: The ACCS accreditation standards require that schools applying for ACCS accreditation agree to actively participate in the ACCS teacher certification process. This standard ensures that ACCS accredited schools are actually doing so.
- e. Indicators:
 - i. The teachers are aware of their certification level and how it impacts them.
- e. Documentation:
 - i. Provide teacher certification plan.
 - ii. Show status of teachers in the school's plan.
 - iii. Note: The school must submit its teacher certification plan to the ACCS Director of Accreditation for review and approval. The ACCS plan was updated in June, 2016.

H.2. Addressing Recommendations and Discrepancies: (Renewal Only) Provide a letter from the school explaining the correction of each discrepancy and any action taken on each recommendation. (This requirement is found on the application for accreditation renewal.)

- a. Principle: Schools submit this letter as part of the application for school renewal accreditation. To ensure that the Visit Committee receives this information, the same letter submitted with the application should be included here.
- e. Documentation:
 - i. Provide a letter explaining the correction of each discrepancy and any action taken on each recommendation.

I. Collaborative: See Appendix A for additional requirements for this endorsement.

J. State Guidelines: See Appendix E for additional requirements for these states:

1. Georgia School Accreditation
2. Iowa School Accreditation
3. Tennessee School Accreditation
4. Texas State School Accreditation
5. Virginia Council for Private Education

K. Requests for Substitutions or Adjustments:

In rare cases, a particular school does not comply with one of the accreditation standards. For example, a missional, service-oriented inner city school funded through private contributions may not conform to indicators for tuition-based funding. Or, a school's mission may serve learning-disabled students who may not conform to all requirements.

In such cases, schools should include requests for adjustments with the application for candidacy status. Such adjustments are only granted when the school is deemed to be in a highly unique situation and they have missional (not practical) reasons for requesting the adjustments.

Exceptions required because the school has a non-traditional model are covered under "Endorsements."

Additional Standards for Collaborative Model

These are additional standards that schools using a collaborative model must address, in addition to the rest of the accreditation standards for all schools.

I. Collaborative

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

Eligibility:

1. Schools must be diploma-granting institutions (or certificate-awarding institution if a K-6 or K-8 program). This endorsement is for institutions that specify a program of courses that qualifies students to receive a diploma (or certificate). ACCS does not accredit homeschool programs or “co-ops.”
2. Grammar school (i.e., grades 1-6) students spend on average at least 14 hours per week on-campus. Logic (i.e., grades 7-8), and rhetoric (i.e., grades 9-12) students spend on average at least 21 hours per week on-campus. (ACCS will consider appeals from schools that have at least 17 hours per week.) Note: Schools receiving ACCS-accreditation prior to May, 2020, with two-day per week programs are exempt from this requirement.

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

C.I. Diploma Track: The school must specify a list of courses and credits required for students in each grade. Successful completion of these requirements culminates in the awarding of a diploma (or certificate) at the end of the 12th grade (or 6th or 8th grade). The required course of study must be well organized and publicized to parents and students in a clear and specific manner.

- a. Principle: A required course of study leading to a diploma is a distinguishing characteristic of schools.
- e. Indicators: For each grade, the school has a list of required courses for full-time students that address the specific subject areas listed in E. Academics.
- e. Documentation should include:
 - i. A list of the required courses by grade that includes course titles, course credits, and course descriptions.
 - ii. Published information about the required courses that schools provide to parents and students.

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

C.2. Time in Class and Home: The school provides sufficient hours of instruction for all students. Schools ensure that students use time off-campus for study and learning.

- a. Principle: Believing that time is related to learning, schools require students to spend sufficient time each week in study.
- e. Indicators: The school has a weekly schedule identifying days when students are required to attend class on-campus. Schools also have clear expectations for additional days and times for learning when students are off-campus. Schools have developed methods to ensure students are accountable for study when off-campus.
- e. Documentation should include:
 - i. Class schedules along with written explanations to help the reviewer understand the specific amount of time students meet for classes on campus.
 - ii. Lesson plans for each grade level for one week, along with directions to parents and/or students for work required for off-campus days.
 - iii. Instructions to parents and sample documents (e.g., student's work, written papers, tests, and quizzes, etc.) used by the school to ensure that students spend time learning while off-campus.

C.3. Assessment: Regardless of the particular form used, schools must have a plan for assessing student learning.

- a. Principle: Students must receive regular assessments so that teachers, students, and parents may know how well students have learned the course material.
- e. Indicators: Schools have identified specific school-wide practices for conducting regular assessments that ensure reliable and authentic measures of student learning. If not under the supervision of teachers, schools have developed mandatory procedures that ensure that student learning is being accurately assessed.
- e. Documentation should include:
 - i. Administrative guidelines (or policies) provided to teachers on how to conduct student assessments, including when to test in class and when to test at home.
 - ii. Written guidelines for parents and students that explain required testing procedures.

C.4. Parent Training: Collaborative schools should expect and require the participation of parents to ensure quality learning occurs when students are not on-campus.

- a. Principle: Schools provide guidance and direction to ensure students learn specific content that follows the school's mission and philosophy of education. Students require accountability to ensure the best use of their time.
- e. Indicators: Admission policies communicate specific expectations to parents for their involvement in student learning.
- e. Schools provide formal training for parents, often referred to as “co-teachers.”
- e. Documentation should include:
 - i. Admission materials that explain the parent's responsibility for student learning.
 - ii. A schedule of dates and times and a description of the training that the school provides to parents.
 - iii. Teacher created or other curriculum materials used for training parents to teach specific subjects.
 - iv. Examples of times when the school has disenrolled or not re-enrolled students due to lack of cooperation from parents.

Notes:

Retention of Faculty: The ACCS Accreditation Handbook includes standard B.6. Enrollment and Employment Stability. One of the indicators for this standard is the teacher retention rate for the past five years. Visit committees should be sure to review the retention rate at collaborative model schools.

Teacher Training: The ACCS Accreditation Handbook also includes standard F.4. Teacher Development. Visit committees should also be sure to review how often the school schedules teacher training meetings. Given the number of part-time teachers plus higher teacher turnover, there must be regular training conducted throughout the school year.

Administrative Staff: The ACCS Accreditation Handbook includes a section on F. Faculty and Instructional Resources which states that the school must have sufficient faculty, instructional, and facility resources to achieve its mission. Given that teachers are only on campus for two or three days per week, collaborative model schools must have sufficient administrators to allow for regular classroom supervision.

Addendum for TEXAS: TEPSAC is discussing waivers and directions to associations who accredit collaborative model schools. This information will be updated once new guidelines are available.

Visit Schedule: As parents are typically considered “co-teachers,” the visit schedule will include a time for three parents to meet with the visit committee.

Multisite Schools: Schools that want to have multiple sites included on a single accreditation visit must meet the following criteria. There are additional standards that schools with multi-sites must address, in addition to the rest of the accreditation standards for all schools. The visit committee will write one report following the visit.

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

Definition of Multisite: Multiple (two or more) campus locations with the same grades operating under a single governing authority. Multisite visits may be accommodated for different school models (conventional, collaborative, special needs, etc.).

Evaluation Questions:

1. Does the organization have more than one building with different addresses that house the same grade level? (For example, second-grade classrooms at facility one and other second-grade classrooms at facility two.)
2. Does the organization have a single board that oversees each facility?
3. Does the organization have a single employee reporting to the board with authority over each facility?
4. Are the facilities located in an area that would allow visit committee members to travel from a central location, spend a full day at each facility, and return to a central location at the end of the day?

Notes:

1. Schools with multiple facilities serving a single succession of grades are not multisite schools. (For example, grades K–6 in one location and grades 7–12 in another location.)
2. Online schools or homeschools are not multisite schools.
3. “Franchise” schools that have multiple locations outside of a single metro are not eligible for a multisite visit. These models would be visited as individual schools. Some shared documentation in the self study will be permitted IF the schools are ready for visits at the same time.

Ability to Conduct the Site Visit:

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

Costs:

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

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

Additional Standards for Multisite Schools:

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

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

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

- a. Definitions: Chief administrator—the board's sole employee. Campus administrator—a person responsible for the administration of a specific campus, who may or may not be located on that campus and may or may not be full-time. Typically, this person would report to the board's main employee.
- e. Principle: Campus administrators are only able to be in one campus location at a time. The greater the number of campus locations, the greater the need to employ qualified, capable campus administrators.
- e. Indicators: The presence of a campus administrator who can train, observe, and guide teachers is directly related to the quality of classroom instruction and the culture of the school. Campus administrators should have sufficient authority to assist teachers in working with parents, have input into teacher retention, address school safety and matters of emergencies.
- e. Documentation:
 - i. List the number of separate classroom buildings and the distance between them.

- ii. Explain the hours when a school administrator is on campus and identify the hours when a school site lacks a campus administrator.
- iii. Provide job descriptions for the chief administrator and campus administrator.

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

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

MS4. Consistent Instruction and Learning. What steps does the school take to ensure consistent instruction and student learning across the schools?

- a. Principle: Parents and students expect to receive consistency in academic programs across all campuses. The quality of instruction provided at each site should be similar. Ensuring consistency in student learning is important for the reputation and success of the school. A student should be able to transfer from one site to another without finding significant academic differences.
- e. Indicators: Campus administrators should not be treated as independent operators. There must be a clear communication of expectations for curriculum and instruction guiding their work.
- e. Documentation should include:
 - i. Directions given to campus administrators regarding areas of student discipline, curriculum and implementation, and pedagogy.
 - ii. Means of monitoring work at individual campuses to ensure consistent learning at each site.
 - iii. Methods of assessment used by the school entity to determine whether the student experience at each site is consistent with the school's mission and vision.

For these accreditation standards required from all schools, multisite schools must provide information for each specific site.

The self-study for these standards should provide campus-specific information.

- F.4. Teacher Development:** The school must have an established, ongoing teacher development program, consistent with the ACCS vision. This should include taking advantage of ACCS-approved conferences, training, audio/video recordings, or other materials.
- F.5. Classroom Observation:** The school shall have written procedures that describe regular and ongoing supervision and classroom observation of all teachers. Policies should require written year-end evaluations for every teacher.

Multi-model Schools: Schools with multiple models that they want to have included on a single accreditation visit must meet the following criteria. ACCS desires to accommodate multi-model schools with a single self-study and a coordinated site visit. These are additional standards that schools with multiple models must address, in addition to the rest of the accreditation standards for all schools. The visit committee will write one report for the organization. However, an additional section will provide a general summary of each school.

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

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

Evaluation Questions:

1. Does one school board oversee two separate schools? (For example, a conventional five-day per week school and a second collaborative model school.)
2. Does each school have distinct admission requirements?
3. Does each school have distinct courses of study and curriculum guides?
4. Does each school have distinct graduation requirements for earning a diploma?

Notes:

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

Ability to Conduct the Site Visit:

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

Costs:

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

Additional Standards for Multi-model Schools:

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

- a. Principle: When assessing the effectiveness of a school, it is helpful to understand the founding vision and history of a school or a school system.
- e. Indicators: In addition to a historical summary, the school may include founding principles in school bylaws.
- e. Documentation should include:
 - i. School bylaws with references to pertinent sections
 - ii. Written history included in promotional materials
 - iii. Any philosophy statements that address founding principles

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

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

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

- a. Principle: Parents and students expect to receive consistency between school programs across all campuses. Ensuring a common vision for implementing the school's mission is key to ensure that this occurs.
- e. Indicators: Schools have a regular means for sharing common communication from the central office. Schools also have a means for assessing the implementation of the mission statement at each location.
- e. Documentation should include:
 - i. Description of the function of the central administrative office. Examples of central office communications.
 - ii. Description and examples of reports from campus administrators to the main office.
 - iii. Describe how often regular meetings of all school administrators are conducted and common topics for those meetings.

For these accreditation standards required from all schools, multisite schools must provide information for each specific site.

The self-study for these standards should provide school-specific information.

F.4. Teacher Development: The school must have an established, ongoing teacher development program, which is consistent with the ACCS vision, and should include taking advantage of ACCS-approved conferences, training, audio/video recordings, and/or materials.

F.5. Classroom Observation: The school shall have written procedures that describe regular and ongoing supervision and classroom observation of all teachers. Policies should require written year-end evaluations for every teacher.

APPENDIX D: ADDITIONAL STANDARDS FOR REGIONAL ACCREDITING ORGANIZATIONS

These are additional standards that schools in these states must address, in addition to ACCS standards.

1. GEORGIA SCHOOL ACCREDITATION ADDENDUM (GAPSAC)

ACCS Board Approval: January 23, 2015

Guidelines: The following criteria are to be used as minimum acceptable requirements to approve an ACCS school for accreditation under this Georgia Addendum in addition to the requirements of Policy 5.3.I, the ACCS Accreditation Policy (i.e., ACCS Accreditation Handbook).

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

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

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

2. IOWA SCHOOL ACCREDITATION ADDENDUM

Iowa Department of Education Approval: April 1, 2024

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

Guidelines: Iowa Code 256.11 subsection 16 means the Iowa Department of Education relies on the independent accrediting agency to determine for the following:

- Identify new schools participating in the independent accrediting agency's accreditation process.
- Each accrediting agency determines the extent of meaningful participation required for a school to be recognized as independently accredited. The DOE must defer to the accrediting agency which makes this decision.
- Identify when a school becomes fully accredited by an independent accrediting agency.
- Verify that the independent accrediting agency continues to accredit the school annually.
- Inform the Department when a school's accreditation status changes, whether the change was voluntary or involuntary, to accredited, not accredited, or any measure of provisional accreditation.

Schools must:

- Register via the edportal on the Department of Education's website.
- Complete annual assurances to comply with statutory health and safety requirements for school facilities.
- Maintain a brick-and-mortar space for face-to-face instruction.
- Meet accreditation criteria as determined by the independent accrediting agency.

3. TENNESSEE SCHOOL ACCREDITATION ADDENDUM

August 2023 Revised

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

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

Criteria for Approval of a Category II Private School Accrediting Agency.

A. Agency Responsibilities. The agency shall

1. Maintain written descriptions of the requirements for school accreditation and of the levels or types of membership granted;
2. Re-evaluate approved schools annually;
3. Give advance publication of proposed changes in accreditation standards to schools. These changes must be approved in advance by the Department;
4. Advise schools or directly provide them with technical assistance to address deficiencies in meeting the accreditation standards of the agency;
5. Notify the Department within ten (10) business days of adding or removing an accredited school from its list;
6. Require schools to report to the accrediting agency on deficiencies that could affect accredited status;
7. Have procedures for revocation of accreditation for any school that does not comply with the agency's standards for approved schools. Such procedures shall include how the agency monitors approved schools for compliance with agency standards, including working with schools to remedy areas of non-compliance that are identified by the Department; and
8. Publish and follow minimum standards for approved schools, including, at a minimum:
 - a. Attendance.
 - i. Each school shall comply with the requirements of T.C.A. § 49-6-3007 regarding the reporting of the names, ages, and addresses of all pupils in attendance to the director of schools for the public school district in which the student resides.
 - ii. Each school shall ensure students entering Kindergarten have reached five (5) years of age on or before August 15 pursuant to T.C.A. § 49-6-201(b)(3), unless the principal or head of school finds through evaluation and testing, at the request of the parent or legal guardian, that a child who is five (5) on or before September 30 is sufficiently mature emotionally and academically to enter Kindergarten and the school has a policy permitting testing by the principal or head of school to obtain early admission to Kindergarten.

- e. Facilities, Health, and Safety.
 - i. Each school shall comply with all laws, rules and regulations, and codes of the city, county, and state regarding planning of new buildings, alterations and health and safety.
 - ii. Each school shall observe all fire safety regulations and procedures promulgated by the Tennessee Fire Marshal's Office.
 - iii. Each school shall conduct at least one (1) fire safety inspection annually based on the fire safety inspection checklist developed by the Tennessee Fire Marshal's Office, and maintain copies of the inspection reports, including findings of non-compliance and actions taken to comply for review by the Tennessee Fire Marshal's Office.
 - iv. Each school shall construct, remodel, renovate, expand, or modify school buildings or other structures in accordance with any state and/or federal requirements applicable to the school regarding building accessibility, which may include, but is not limited to, the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.
 - v. Each principal or head of school shall comply with the requirement of Department of Health Rules and T.C.A. § 49-6-5001 that each child enrolled in school be vaccinated against disease, subject to any applicable exemptions set forth in State law or Department of Health Rules.
 - vi. Each school shall conduct a criminal history records check prior to employment for any person applying for or holding a position as a teacher or any other position requiring proximity to school children. Criminal history records checks shall also be required for any person or employee of the person, corporation, or other entity who contracts with a school and who will have direct contact with school children or access to the grounds of the school when children are present. The criminal history records check shall be fingerprint based or social security number based and shall also include a check of the Tennessee and National Sex Offender Registries and the Tennessee Department of Health Abuse Registry. Schools may also search the Tennessee educator licensure database (TNCompass) to determine if an applicant for a teaching position or any other position requiring proximity to school children has had a Tennessee educator license suspended or revoked for misconduct.
- e. Curriculum and Graduation.
 - i. The instructional program shall include, but not be limited to, the areas of English language arts, mathematics, social studies, and science. Additionally, schools are encouraged to offer art, music, health and physical education, and world language.
 - ii. Each school shall use textbooks and instructional materials that adequately cover all subjects in the school's instructional program.
 - iii. Each high school shall adopt a graduation requirements policy requiring students to earn at least the minimum number of total credits required for graduation set by the State Board in Rule

0520-01-03-.06. The school's policy shall also require students to achieve the required minimum number of credits set by the State Board in Rule 0520-01-03-.06 in the subjects of English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. This provision shall not be construed as requiring the same courses in the subjects of English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies that are required for public schools. The school shall determine the additional subject areas and credits necessary for graduation from high school as set forth in the school's graduation requirements policy to meet or exceed the minimum total number of credits set by the State Board in Rule 0520-01-03-.06.

- iv. At least once every school year, each school shall give a nationally standardized achievement test covering the areas of English language arts and math to each pupil in third (3rd) through eleventh (11th) grades; the results must be communicated to teachers and parents and kept on file at the school for one (1) calendar year. Examples of nationally standardized achievement tests include ACT/SAT and benchmark assessments. Schools may identify alternate assessments for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities.
- e. Teacher Licensure and Evaluation.
 - i. Each school shall ensure that all teachers and principals are appropriately licensed or credentialed, as defined by the accrediting agency.
 - ii. Each school shall develop procedures for evaluation of all teachers and principals.
 - iii. Each school shall provide a sufficient number of appropriately qualified administrators, supervisors, and other personnel, which may include, but is not limited to, librarians, and school counselors, for the student body served.
- e. Administrative Rules.
 - i. Each school shall maintain an operating schedule that includes the minimum number of instructional days (180) and minimum number of hours per day (6 ½) required of public schools. In accordance with T.C.A. § 49-6-3004, a school that exceeds the required six and one-half (6 ½) hours of instructional time per day for the full academic year shall be credited with the additional instructional time in amounts up to, but not exceeding, thirteen (13) instructional days each school year. Such excess instructional time shall be used in accordance with T.C.A. § 49-6-3004(e)(1). Schools that are unable to meet the required 180 instructional day requirement due to natural disaster or serious outbreak of illness affecting or endangering students or staff during the school year may request a waiver of the minimum instructional day requirement from the school's accrediting agency.
 - ii. Each school shall comply with applicable state and federal laws prohibiting discrimination on the basis of disability, including but not limited to the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

- iii. Each school shall develop and implement a written policy on promotion and retention. The written policy shall be communicated to students and parents via the school handbook.
- iv. Each school shall ensure that class sizes do not exceed the class size maximums set forth in state law.
- v. Each school shall maintain complete and accurate permanent records of the following for all students, attendance, disciplinary matters, work completed while enrolled at the school, and promotion or retention determinations.
- vi. Each school shall provide periodic reports of student needs and academic progress to parents or legal guardians during each school year.

4. Texas State School Accreditation Addendum (TEPSAC)

ACCS Board Approval: March 11, 2014

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

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

The ACCS Director of Accreditation shall respond in writing on behalf of the board of directors to the head of the appealing school with the board's final determination. A copy of the final disposition shall be sent to TEPSAC along with a copy of the appeal and the school's supporting documentation.

6. Major Discrepancy. A major discrepancy is defined as the failure of a school to sufficiently meet one or more of the criteria listed in Section 2 Standards.
7. Participation in TEPSAC. ACCS will actively participate in the governance of TEPSAC, and may do so through designation of a proxy to act on its behalf. The designated proxy does not have the authority to commit either the resources of ACCS or to make any policy binding ACCS and its association members.

5. VIRGINIA STATE SCHOOL ACCREDITATION ADDENDUM (VCPE)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- E. An accredited school must adhere to the maintenance and disposition of student and staff records including having policies that address:

1. Required information that must be included records;
2. Storage of records;
3. Handling records if school closes.
4. Assignment of a custodian of records.

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

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

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

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

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

- F. An accredited school must maintain records demonstrating professional personnel are CPR, First Aid and AED certified.
1. Medication Administration Training;
 2. Assessment and Management of Concussions; and,
 3. Prevention and Mitigation of Bullying.

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

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

GUIDANCE: Review policy on internet usage.

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

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

- E. Safe Schools Initiative

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

F. Virginia Addendum to accreditation reviews (Amended 10.1.2021)

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