

Iowa State Board of Education

Executive Summary

March 21, 2024



Agenda Item: Association of Classical Christian Schools Independent Accrediting Agency Application Approval

State Board Priority: Eliminating Achievement and Opportunity Gaps

State Board Role/Authority: Iowa Code section 256.11 subsection 16 grants authority to the State Board to maintain a list of approved independent accrediting agencies

Presenter(s): Tina Wahlert, Chief
Bureau of School Improvement

Eric Heitz, Administrative Consultant
Bureau of School Improvement

Dennis McClain, Education Program Consultant
Bureau of School Improvement

Attachment(s): One

Recommendation: It is recommended that the State Board of Education approve the Association of Classical Christian Schools application as a “reliable authority concerning the quality of education” and grant the agency’s authority to accredit nonpublic schools in the state of Iowa.

Background:

A nonpublic school may be accredited by an independent accrediting agency that appears on a list maintained by the State Board of Education. The list shall include accrediting agencies that, as of January 1, 2013, accredited a nonpublic school in this state that was concurrently accredited under this section; and any agency that has a formalized partnership agreement with another agency on the list and has member schools in this state as of January 1, 2013. Five agencies met this standard at the enactment of these rules:

- Independent Schools Association of the Central States (ISACS)
- Christian Schools International (CSI)
- Cognia (formerly AdvancEd)
- The National Lutheran Schools Association (NLSA)
- The Association of Christian Schools International (ASCI)

Three agencies have been approved by the State Board:

- American Montessori Society (May 2014)
- Middle States Association-Commissions on Elementary and Secondary Schools (January 2024)
- Accrediting Commission for Western Association of Schools and Colleges (January 2024)



February 6, 2024

Association of Classical Christian Schools

Background

Iowa Code section 256.11 subsection 16 grants authority to the State Board to maintain a list of approved independent accrediting agencies. Agencies on this list may accredit nonpublic schools.

The list shall include accrediting agencies that, as of January 1, 2013, accredited a nonpublic school in this state that was concurrently accredited under this section; and any agency that has a formalized partnership agreement with another agency on the list and has member schools in this state as of January 1, 2013. Five agencies met this standard at the enactment of these rules:

1. Independent Schools Association of the Central States (ISACS)
2. Christian Schools International (CSI)
3. Cognia (formerly AdvancEd)
4. The National Lutheran Schools Association (NLSA)
5. The Association of Christian Schools International (ASCI)

Three agencies have applied and been approved by the State Board:

1. The American Montessori Society (May 2014)
2. Middle States Association-Commissions on Elementary and Secondary Schools (January 2024)
3. Accrediting Commission for Western Association of Schools and Colleges (January 2024)

Eight accrediting agencies are on the approved list.

The deadline to apply to become an approved independent accrediting agency to be placed on the state approved list was February 2, 2024. The applicant was notified via email the application was received before the deadline and was under review.

Application Review Process

The application review process included three readers. Each read all applications and utilized the scoring matrix aligned to the application. After individual readers reviewed and scored each application independently, readers discussed the application and came to the application's scores. The scoring matrix below indicates the scores assigned to the Association of Classical Christian Schools.

Section	Rationale	Score
Section A: Organization Information	The application provided a thorough handbook detailing services and accreditation process. The agency was recognized for success criteria of graduates. (Good Soil Report conducted by University of Notre Dame.)	28/32
Section B: Accreditation Standards	The application provided a detailed requirement for fiscal management, rigorous academic standards and assessment practices. The agency provided a description for corrective actions when standards are not met.	44/50

Section	Rationale	Score
Section C. Accreditation Process	The application clearly laid out how a school navigates through the accreditation process.	10/10
Section D. Organization Structure, Citations	The application provided evidence of detailed fiscal, data, and contract management practices and procedures.	7/8
Section E. Additional Information (no points)	The agency currently accredits 64 schools in 27 states. The applicant provided a thorough fiscal audit report.	NA
Final Applicant Score and Final Rationale (if appropriate)	Recommended	89/100

Score Range	Recommendation
75-100 (75%+)	Recommended
60-74 (60-74%)	Recommended subject to conditions or assurances
<60 (<59%)	Not Recommended

Recommendation

Association of Classical Christian Schools received a score of 89 across the required components in the application. It is recommended that the State Board approve the Association of Classical Christians Schools to accredit Iowa nonpublic schools as stated in the Iowa Code section 256.11 subsection 16.

Appendices

Appendix A – Application For Initial Recognition December 2023

Appendix B – Association of Classical Christian Schools Accreditation Handbook



Application for Initial Recognition as a “Reliable Authority Concerning the Quality of Education Offered by a School”

The purpose of this application is to determine whether your organization is a “reliable authority concerning the quality of education” offered by an accredited nonpublic school. The questions in this application have two purposes: (1) to determine your organization’s reliability in its accreditation authority, and (2) to determine your organization’s capability of helping schools maintain programs of acceptable quality.

When evidence required to answer a question is available in electronic format, please feel free to provide an electronic copy in lieu of paper copies. When evidence is available on a publicly accessible internet page, you may provide the web address as your response. If any evidence is password-protected, please provide passwords under separate cover. If any evidence is password-protected or otherwise protected from disclosure, please describe the grounds for protecting that information from disclosure.

Answer all questions and complete the certification at the end of the application. Contact Eric Heitz at 515-326-1018 or Tina Wahlert at 515-326-0162 if you need more information.

Application Deadline: February 2, 2024

The results of the review of applications will be presented to the Iowa State Board of Education at its March 21, 2024 meeting.

Application Sections

There are 4 required sections in this application and an additional section that may be required upon the request of the Iowa Department of Education (Department):

- Section A. Organization Information
- Section B. Accreditation Standards
- Section C. Accreditation Process
- Section D. Organization Structure, Citations and Audits
- Section E. Additional Information

Answer all questions about your organization to the best of your ability. Provide ample evidence as indicated.

Section A. Organization Information

Questions 1 through 6 are focused on basic organization information such as name, phone number, and so on, description/evidence needed to continue past Section 1 of the application process, as well as space to highlight any form of recognition for innovation or excellence for the organization’s work in this area.



1. Organization Contact Information

Area	Completed by Applicant
Name of Organization:	Association of Classical Christian Schools
Telephone Number:	(208) 882-6101
Web Address:	Classicalchristian.org
Form of Organization (corporation, LLC, etc.):	Association, 501 (c) 3
Taxpayer ID #:	82-0486702
Parent Organization, if any:	
Address of Parent Organization:	
Trade Name, if any:	
Contact Person:	Tom Spencer
Address of Organization:	317 West Sixth Street, Suite #211, Moscow, ID 83843
Chief Executive or Other Authorized Representative:	David Goodwin, President Tom Spencer, Director of Accreditation

2. Provide evidence that your organization is a nonprofit, nongovernmental agency. *Note if no evidence is provided, your organization is disqualified from recognition.*

Evidence: I have attached to this application a letter from the IRS acknowledging our 501 (c)3 status. (See p. 1 in Iowa Application Materials.)

Evidence for Question 2.

INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE
P. O. BOX 2508
CINCINNATI, OH 45201

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

Date: **SEP 15 2000**

Employer Identification Number:
82-0486702

DLN:
17053246749040

ASSOCIATION OF CLASSICAL &
CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS INC
PO BOX 9741
MOSCOW, ID 83843

Contact Person:
DAVID B KOUCKY ID# 31368

Contact Telephone Number:
(877) 829-5500

Our Letter Dated:
March 1996

Addendum Applies:
No

Dear Applicant:

This modifies our letter of the above date in which we stated that you would be treated as an organization that is not a private foundation until the expiration of your advance ruling period.

Your exempt status under section 501(a) of the Internal Revenue Code as an organization described in section 501(c) (3) is still in effect. Based on the information you submitted, we have determined that you are not a private foundation within the meaning of section 509(a) of the Code because you are an organization of the type described in section 509 (a) (2) .

Grantors and contributors may rely on this determination unless the Internal Revenue Service publishes notice to the contrary. However, if you lose your section 509(a) (2) status, a grantor or contributor may not rely on this determination if he or she was in part responsible for, or was aware of, the act or failure to act, or the substantial or material change on the part of the organization that resulted in your loss of such status, or if he or she acquired knowledge that the Internal Revenue Service had given notice that you would no longer be classified as a section 509(a) (2) organization.

You are required to make your annual information return, Form 990 or Form 990-EZ, available for public inspection for three years after the later of the due date of the return or the date the return is filed. You are also required to make available for public inspection your exemption application, any supporting documents, and your exemption letter. Copies of these documents are also required to be provided to any individual upon written or in person request without charge other than reasonable fees for copying and postage. You may fulfill this requirement by placing these documents on the Internet. Penalties may be imposed for failure to comply with these requirements. Additional information is available in Publication 557, Tax-Exempt Status for Your Organization, or you may call our toll free number, shown above.

If we have indicated in the heading of this letter that an addendum applies, the addendum enclosed is an integral part of this letter.

Letter 1050 (DO/CG)

ASSOCIATION OF CLASSICAL &

Because this letter could help resolve any questions about your private foundation status, please keep it in your permanent records.

If you have any questions, please contact the person whose name and telephone number are shown above.

Sincerely yours,

Steven L li4ill

Steven T. Miller
Director, Exempt Organizations



3. Describe and provide evidence that your organization certifies, provides licenses, or accredits public and nonpublic elementary and secondary schools as providing a minimally adequate educational program? *Note if no evidence is provided, your organization is disqualified from recognition.*

We currently have 64 accredited schools and 16 schools that are candidates for accreditation.

Evidence: See the list of accredited schools here: <https://classicalchristian.org/accredited-member-schools/>

Evidence: See the list of candidate schools here: <https://classicalchristian.org/accreditation-candidates/>

Our accreditation standards cover seven areas including Cultivation of Student Virtue and the School Community, Academics, Faculty and Instructional Resources, and Student Work Samples. Standards under these areas are evaluated during the written self-study and again during the site visit.

Evidence: See pp. 11-35, Section 2: Standards in the ACCS Accreditation Handbook.

Particular standards include:

C. 7. Compliance with the Law. This standard assesses school's compliance with state laws including length of school, vaccination and security matters.

E. 1. Sayers and Gregory. One of the standards that evaluates instruction.

E. 2. Program and Graduation Requirements. A standard that evaluates the overall academic program as well as high-school graduation requirements.

E. 3. Complete Curriculum. Schools must have complete written curriculum.

Academic standards include:

E. 4. A. Phonics

E. 4. B. Latin and Greek

E. 4. C. Logic and Rhetoric

E. 4. D. Western Civilization

E. 4. E. Writing

E. 4. F. Bible

E. 4. G. Mathematics

E. 4. F. Science

E. 4. I. Theology

E. 4. J. a Art

E. 4. J. b. Music

E. 5. Academic Evaluation and Assessment. This standard relates to standardized testing.

Relevant Standards in Section F: Faculty and Instructional Resources include:



F. 1. Faculty Requirements. This standard involves those who are hired to teach.

F. 2. Class Size

F. 3. Books and Ad Fontes. This standard relates to library resources and reading.

F. 4. Teacher Development. This standard relates to how teachers are trained.

F. 5. Classroom Observation.

G. Student Work Samples. The self-study requires schools to provide sample work in these areas: phonics, writing from all levels, poetry, teacher made tests, Latin, rhetoric, and art.

4. Describe and provide evidence that your organization has accreditation standards by which it certifies, licenses, or accredits public and nonpublic elementary and secondary schools as providing a minimally adequate educational program? Within this description include the following items:
- how the standards were developed and adopted.
 - how the standards are reviewed and revised.
 - identify the research on which the standards are grounded.

Note if no evidence is provided, your organization is disqualified from recognition.

[A. How the standards were developed and adopted.]

On December 18, 1997, the ACCS Board of Directors approved a Policy. 5.0.2 adopting a process and guidelines for the accreditation of member schools. The scope was "This policy applies to all school members of ACCS applying for accreditation by the association, and the guidelines are the minimum that a school must attain to be accredited. On January 7, 2000, Logos School in Moscow, Idaho became the first ACCS-accredited schools.

Evidence: See pp. 3-5, Original ACCS Policy Manual, in the Iowa Application Materials



ASSOCIATION OF CLASSICAL &
CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

Policies of the Board of
Directors

Updated January, 2016

ARTICLE I	PURPOSE	4
1.01	<i>Board Policy Manual</i>	4
1.02	<i>Operations Handbook</i>	4
ARTICLE II	PHILOSOPHY	6
2.01	<i>Non-discrimination Policy</i>	6
ARTICLE III	BOARD OF DIRECTORS.....	7
3.01	<i>Meetings</i>	7
3.02	<i>Board Terms</i>	7
3.03	<i>Duties of the Board of Directors</i>	7
3.04	<i>Director's Conference Fees</i>	8
3.05	<i>ACCS Board Minute Keeping Guidelines</i>	9
3.06	<i>Conflict of Interest Policy</i>	9
3.07	<i>Board Calendar</i>	11
ARTICLE IV	PRESIDENT.....	13
4.01	<i>Job Description/Evaluation</i>	13
4.02	<i>Specific Conflicts of Interest regarding the President of the ACCS</i>	13
ARTICLE V	MEMBER SERVICES.....	15
5.01	<i>Membership Application Approval</i>	15
5.02	<i>School Accreditation</i>	15
5.03	<i>Accreditation Fees</i>	15
5.04	<i>Member Fees</i>	16
5.05	<i>Accreditation Subcommittee of the Board of Directors</i>	16
5.06	<i>Guidelines for Joining Private Accrediting Oversight Agencies</i>	17
5.07	<i>Texas State School Accreditation Addendum</i>	18
5.08	<i>Teacher Certification</i>	19
5.09	<i>Government Voucher Policy</i>	21
ARTICLE VI	BUSINESS	22
6.01	<i>Insurance</i>	22
6.02	<i>ECFA Membership</i>	22
6.03	<i>Sexual Harassment or Misconduct</i>	22
ARTICLE VII	FINANCES	24
7.01	<i>Budget Time Frame</i>	24
7.02	<i>Fiscal Year</i>	24
7.03	<i>Quarterly Financial Reports</i>	24
ARTICLE VIII	OTHER POLICIES.....	26
8.01	<i>Conference Locale Selection</i>	26
APPENDIX A	ACCS CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY	27

Article V Member Services

5.01 Membership Application Approval

Date Approved: 7/25/96

Objective: To establish procedures for the executive director to approve applications for ACCS membership.

Scope: This policy applies to all applications for all categories of membership in the association.

Definitions:

Guidelines:

1. The President is authorized to approve all membership applications on behalf of the association based upon the applicant's affirmative completion of the membership requirements as they are listed in the Join with Us document.

5.02 School Accreditation

Date Approved: 12/18/97 Revised 6/22/05

Revised 2/19/98 Revised 9/15/05

Revised 6/21/00 Revised 2/16/07

Revised 9/21/00 Revised 1/12/08

Revised 3/12/02 Revised 1/30/09

Revised 9/19/02 Revised 1/15/10

Revised 6/23/04 Revised 1/20/16

Revised 9/16/04

Objective: To establish the criteria for accreditation of an ACCS school member.

Scope: This policy applies to all school members of ACCS applying for accreditation by the association, and the guidelines are the minimum that a school must attain to be accredited.

Definitions:

Guidelines: Accreditation standards are listed in the Accreditation Handbook. These standards may not be altered except by ACCS board action.

5.03 Accreditation Fees

Date Approved: 11/21/96

Revised 7/21/97

Revised 6/21/00

Revised 1/10/02

Revised 6/23/16

Objective: To establish fees for expenses associated with the accreditation of ACCS colleges and schools.



[B. How the standards are reviewed and revised.]

On June 11, 2019, the ACCS board approved the second edition of the ACCS accreditation handbook. A subcommittee of the board reviewed and revised each of the standards in the accreditation handbook. As part of its work, the committee reviewed accreditation materials from other school associations such as ACSI and COGNIA. The committee added indicators to the description of each standard.

Evidence: See the first page in the accreditation handbook, Initial Approval and Revisions, for the approval date for the second edition.

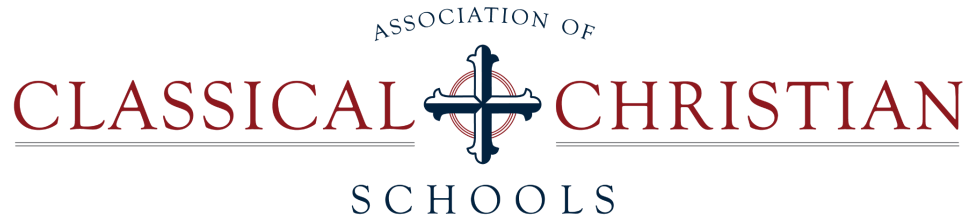
On August 23, 2022, the ACCS president established the ACCS Commission on Standards for Accreditation. The purposes of the commission are:

A. CSA is chartered by the President of ACCS, for the following purposes:

- a. To establish and promote objective and recognizable standards of quality for the academic and other accreditation standards of the ACCS.
- b. To engage scholars in the classical Christian movement to explore areas of interest to the Commission and to review the results of their work.
- c. To create or amend and submit Accreditation Standards to the President of the ACCS for approval.

Evidence: See p. 6-11, ACCS Commission on Standards for Accreditation, in the Iowa Application Materials

Evidence for Question 4.



ACCS
Commission on Standards
for Accreditation

A Chartered Committee of
The Association of Classical Christian Schools

CHARTER

The President of the Association of Classical Christian Schools (ACCS herein), does hereby extend the following Charter.

Article I

Name

The name of the organization will be “Commission on Standards for Accreditation” (CSA or Commission, herein).

Article II

Nonprofit Status

CSA shall operate under the oversight of the President of ACCS within the authority of The Association of Classical and Christian Schools, Incorporated, a nonprofit corporation in conformity with the provisions of the Idaho Nonprofit Corporation Act, being Chapter 3, Title 30, Idaho Code.

Article III

Duration

CSA’s charter may be revoked or altered at any time by the President of ACCS.

Article IV

Purposes

- A. CSA is chartered by the President of ACCS, for the following purposes:
 - a. To establish and promote objective and recognizable standards of quality for the academic and other accreditation standards of the ACCS.
 - b. To engage scholars in the classical Christian movement to explore areas of interest to the Commission and to review the results of their work.
 - c. To create or amend and submit Accreditation Standards to the President of the ACCS for approval.
- B. *Confession of Faith.* The Confession of Faith of the CSA is that of the ACCS.

Article V

Limitations

- A. CSA derives its sole authority to operate by delegation from the President of ACCS.
- B. CSA has no power other than those contained within this document.
- C. The business of CSA shall be managed by its Chairman, with oversight by the President of ACCS.

D. The power to amend CSA's bylaws resides solely with the President of ACCS.

Article VI
Commission Members

The Commission shall comprise the following seats:

- Seat 1: Chairman. This person shall have knowledge of classical Christian education, the accreditation process, and administrative skills.
- Seat 2: ACCS Vice President (CADE) overseeing accreditation
- Seat 3: ACCS Director of Accreditation
- Seat 4: ACCS accredited school Head of School. This position requires someone who participates as a team lead or frequent visitor on school accreditation visits
- Seat 5: ACCS accredited school Academic Dean (or similarly qualified person).
- Seats 6-10: Other optional members are determined by the President of ACCS

Article VII
Initial Commission

The names of the initial Members of CASA are as follows:

- Chairman: Dr. Christopher Schlect
- Vice-President: Dr. Quentin Johnston
- Director of Accreditation: Tom Spencer
- Head of School: Richard Halloren, Providence School in Spring Texas
- Academic Dean: Sam Koenen, Academic Dean at Petra Academy
- Teacher Training & Pedagogy: Bryan Lynch, Academic Dean at Veritas Academy in Newburg, Oregon.
- Seat 6-10: Presidential ad hoc appointments (unfilled unless additional expertise is needed.)

Article VIII
Registered Office and Registered Agent

The registered office of CSA shall be that of The Association of Classical and Christian Schools: 317 W. 6th St., STE 211, Moscow, ID 83843

Article IX
Members

CSA shall have no members other than the appointed members of the Commission.

BYLAWS

Article I *Commission Members*

A. *Compensation*

- a. The Chairman of CSA will receive a stipend set by the President of ACCS
- b. Members of CSA are not compensated per se, but may, at the discretion of the President of the ACCS, from time to time receive compensation commensurate with the projects that are involved with.

B. *Powers*

- a. CSA has no power other than those contained within this document.
- b. The business of CSA shall be managed by its Chairman, with oversight by the President of ACCS.

C. *Appointment and Term of Office of Directors*

- a. There shall be up to seven (7) members of CSA including the ACCS Vice President overseeing accreditation, and the ACCS Director of Accreditation.
- b. All Members shall be appointed by the President of the ACCS.
- c. Terms:
 - i. The Chairman shall serve for a term of 3 years, renewable once.
 - ii. Seats 2 and 3 are standing positions that do not expire.
 - iii. Each of the other members shall serve for renewable terms of one year.
 - iv. The terms for seats 4-10 shall be staggered at one-year intervals, such that one Member shall come on the Commission each year. Terms of the Members will begin July 1 and end June 30th.

D. *Qualifications of Members*

- a. All CSA Members must subscribe to the confession of Faith adopted by the ACCS. In all cases, the demonstrated Christian profession and walk of the individual board member shall be a major consideration as to their suitability as members.
- b. All Members must demonstrate expertise valuable to the Commission, and a commitment to classical Christian education as defined by the ACCS mission statement and the “What Does It Mean to Be a “Classical Christian” School?” document for membership.
- c. Commission Members should represent different institutions.
- d. Paid staff members of ACCS are full voting members.

E. *Commission Meetings and Voting Requirements*

- a. Meetings will be held twice per year at a minimum and from time to time as need dictates.
- b. The Commission Chairman may determine that meetings of the Members be conducted by means of a conference telephone, videoconference, or other electronic communications equipment, by means of which, all persons participating in the meeting can hear each other. Such participation in a

meeting pursuant to this section shall constitute in-person presence at such meeting and all rules of procedure will apply.

- c. Half of the full voting Commission plus the Chairman shall constitute a quorum for the purpose of transacting Commission business. In the event of an odd-number of voting members, "half" will be defined as the number of voting members divided by 2 and rounded up to one full member.
- d. All CSA meetings shall be conducted according to Robert's Rules of Order, using a printed, pre-published agenda. Minutes of all regular meetings will be published and maintained electronically in a place accessible to CSA members.

F. *Commission Action*

- a. The Commission will be considered to have acted only when, in a duly constituted meeting, a proposal is moved, seconded, discussed, passed by the appropriate majority, entered in the minutes, and approved.

G. *Removal of Member.*

- a. CSA members may be removed either by the unilateral action of the President of ACCS, or three-fifths of the sitting members may petition the President of ACCS for removal of any member whom they believe lacks a basic commitment to the Commission's confession of faith, the objectives of the Commission, or who lacks a basic prudence and diligence in matters brought before the Commission. Any such petition shall be accompanied by a brief statement of the facts supporting the petition. Following the ACCS President's reviews of such a petition, a member may be removed from the Commission.

Article II

Officers of the Commission

A. *Officers of the Commission.* CSA officers shall consist of a Chairman, a Vice-Chairman, and a Secretary. No two offices may be held by the same person.

B. *Duties of the Chairman.*

- a. The Chairman shall preside over CSA meetings. The Chairman shall enjoy full privileges of voting and debate, and may make motions.

C. *Duties of the Vice-Chairman.*

- a. The Vice-Chairman shall act in the place of the Chairman when the Chairman is absent. The Vice-Chairman shall have all rights and privileges of the Chairman when he is seated as Chairman, to include the satisfaction of a quorum.

D. *Duties of the Secretary.*

- a. The Secretary shall cause to be kept a book of minutes of all meetings and actions of the Commission, with the time and place of holding, whether regular or special, and, if special, how authorized, the notice thereof given, the names of those present at meetings, the names and number of members present or represented at meetings, and the proceedings thereof. In place of a physical

book, this information may be kept electronically in a place accessible to the CSA members and the President of ACCS..

- b. The Secretary shall cause notice to be given of all CSA meetings as may be required by the Bylaws, and shall have such other powers and perform such other duties as may be prescribed by the Commission or by the Bylaws.

Article III
Amendments to Bylaws

Procedure for Amendment. These Bylaws may be altered, amended, or repealed only by the President of ACCS. The Commission may, by a two-thirds vote, petition the President of ACCs to amend the Bylaws.

The above CHARTER and BYLAWS are APPROVED AND ADOPTED by the President of the Association of Classical Christian Schools this 23rd day of August, 2022.

DAVID GOODWIN



[C. Identify the research on which the standards are grounded.]

As mentioned above, the entire accreditation handbook was reviewed in 2018. As mentioned, during this process, the committee compared ACCS accreditation standards with standards from other associations.

ACCS has sought membership in other organizations who have reviewed and approved the ACCS accreditation handbook. Some of these organizations have reviewed the standards and observed ACCS while conducting school visits.

ACCS is recognized by:

National Council for Private School Accreditation (NCPA). Evidence: See list of member organizations: <https://ncpsa.org/about-us/>

Georgia Private School Accreditation Council (GAPSAC). Evidence: See list of member associations: <https://gapsac.org/association-members/>

Oklahoma Private School Accreditation Council (OPSAC). Evidence: See list of member associations: <https://www.opsac.org/associations.html>

Texas Private School Accreditation Commission (TEPSAC). Evidence: See list of accrediting agencies: <https://www.tepsac.org/app/index.html#/agencies>

Tennessee, State Board of Education. Evidence: See list of Category II accrediting agencies: <https://www.tn.gov/education/families/school-options/non-public-schools/non-public-school-categories.html>

Virginia Council for Private Education (VCPE). Evidence: See Board of Directors: <https://www.vcpe.org/board-of-directors/>

5. Is your organization's principal business or activity advising or evaluating public and nonpublic elementary and secondary schools on "the quality of education?"
- Yes. Provide evidence.

A. The Mission of the ACCS is "To promote, establish, and equip member schools that are committed to a classical approach in the light of a Christian worldview."

Evidence: See <https://classicalchristian.org/the-mission-of-the-accs/>

B. School accreditation is one of the main activities listed on our website under "What We Do".

"The ACCS is leading the growth of classical Christian education (CCE) through targeted initiatives. We believe that classical Christian education can serve the church as it restores a Christian Paideia (and Christian worldview) in our children and our communities."

Evidence: See <https://classicalchristian.org/accreditation/>.

- No. Explain.



6. Has your organization received any form of recognition for innovation or excellence concerning its work?
- Yes. Describe.

A. ACCS has completed a number of assessments to measure the quality of education provided in members schools. In particular, see *The Good Soil Report*. “The Good Soil Report is a 2018-2019 comparative study of 24-to 42-year-old alumni from public, secular private, Catholic, evangelical Christian, religious homeschool, and ACCS schools on the topics of life choices, preparation, attitudes, values, opinions, and practices.”

Evidence: See <https://classicalchristian.org/measure-it/>

Evidence: Read the report here: <https://classicaldifference.com/good-soil/>

- No.

Section B. Accreditation Standards

Questions 7-11 are specific to your organization's accreditation standards. For these questions, **describe and provide evidence of the component of your organization's accreditation standards that require:**

7. A school to set high academic and nonacademic standards for all students, including preparation of students for postsecondary success.

The philosophy of classical Christian education is based on the history of a liberal arts education.

“We Consider Great Books, Art, and Stories.

Students engage great books and art containing rich stories that shape both the soul, literary understanding, and moral imagination. A rich and nuanced command of language plays an unsung role in understanding God's word, and in understanding our fellow man.

And, a thorough immersion in the study of history using original sources helps students step outside their own times and places and consider the world from very different vantage points. Going ad fontes, to the source in Latin, means we read original sources and avoid textbooks for history and literature.”

This philosophy exposes students to Great Ideas, Great Books, Socratic Discussion, Liberal Arts, Ad Fontes (Original Sources), Fine Arts and more. (See <https://classicalchristian.org/what-is-cce/>)

Evidence: See the glossary of terms related to the philosophy of liberal arts education here: <https://classicalchristian.org/glossary-of-terms-home/>

Particular standards include:

C. 7. Compliance with the Law. This standard assesses school's compliance with state laws including length of school, vaccination and security matters.

E. 1. Sayers and Gregory. One of the standards that evaluates instruction.



E. 2. Program and Graduation Requirements. A standard that evaluates the overall academic program as well as high-school graduation requirements.

E. 3. Complete Curriculum. Schools must have complete written curriculum.

Academic standards include:

E. 4. A. Phonics

E. 4. B. Latin and Greek (Four years are required for accreditation)

E. 4. C. Logic and Rhetoric (One year of each subject)

E. 4. D. Western Civilization

E. 4. E. Writing

E. 4. F. Bible

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

E. 4. F. Science (Training in general science, biology, chemistry, and an opportunity to take physics)

E. 4. I. Theology

E. 4. J. a Art

E. 4. J. b. Music

E. 5. Academic Evaluation and Assessment. This standard relates to standardized testing.

Relevant Standards in Section F: Faculty and Instructional Resources include:

F. 1. Faculty Requirements. This standard involves those who are hired to teach.

F. 2. Class Size

F. 3. Books and Ad Fontes. This standard relates to library resources and reading.

F. 4. Teacher Development. This standard relates to how teachers are trained.

F. 5. Classroom Observation.

G. Student Work Samples.

The self study requires schools to provide sample work in these areas: phonics, writing from all levels, poetry, teacher made tests, Latin, rhetoric, and art.

Non-Academic standards include:

D. 4. Activities. This standard addresses non-classroom activities.

Evidence: See pp. 11-35, Section 2: Standards in the ACCS Accreditation Handbook.

8. A school to monitor and assess all students' progress toward high academic and nonacademic standards.

These are the relevant standards in the ACCS accreditation program.

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.

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



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.

Evidence: See pp. 11-35, Section 2: Standards in the ACCS Accreditation Handbook.

9. A school to recruit and retain properly licensed quality professional staff, and provide those staff members with ongoing professional development.

These are the relevant standards in the ACCS accreditation program.

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.

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.

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.

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.)

Evidence: See pp. 11-35, Section 2: Standards in the ACCS Accreditation Handbook.

10. A school to set requirements for fiscal, data and contract management.

These are the relevant standards in the ACCS accreditation program.

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.

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.

B.4. Financial Accountability: The school must provide a financial accountability report verified by an independent accounting source.

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.

Evidence: See pp. 11-35, Section 2: Standards in the ACCS Accreditation Handbook.

11. How your organization takes appropriate corrective action when accreditation standards are not met.

These are the relevant standards in the ACCS accreditation program.



A. Annual Renewal: Accredited schools are required to complete an annual renewal form.
 “K. Annual Review for ACCS-Accredited Schools Each ACCS-accredited school must answer these questions on an annual basis during membership renewal:”

Evidence: See p. 44 in the ACCS Accreditation Handbook.

B. Substantive Change:
 L. Substantive Change in ACCS-Accredited Schools

“Under certain conditions, ACCS-accredited schools are required to send a report within 60 days of any of the following changes in the school. Failure to notify ACCS as required of a substantive change is grounds for the association to issue a letter asking the school to show cause as to why the school’s status should not be withheld, with a time stated, to a candidate or accredited school. If a substantive change occurs in an accredited school, the continuation of the school’s accredited status, or the inclusion of the substantive change in the institution’s previous grant of accreditation, shall require. notice to the Director of Accreditation regarding the proposed change and may require. at the discretion of the ACCS:”

Evidence: See p. 45 in the ACCS Accreditation Handbook.

Section C. Accreditation Process

Questions 12-17 are focused on your organization’s accreditation process, including criteria, how to begin and any suspension or removal of a school from accreditation.

12. Describe the process by which a school seeks your organization’s accreditation.

Here is a brief summary of Accreditation Overview.

- A. Application
- B. Previsit
- C. Self-Study
- D. Site Visit
- E. Report
- F. Vote on Report’s Recommendation
- G. Re-Evaluation (every two or five years).
- H. Annual Update

Evidence: See p. 8-9 in ACCS Accreditation Handbook.

13. Describe the process by which your organization actively monitors a school’s performance based on its accreditation standards after it achieves accreditation. Also, describe the process by which a school renews its accreditation through your organization.

“G. Annual Updates. ACCS requires annual feedback from each accredited school (as part of the membership renewal process) to ensure schools remain in compliance with the ACCS accreditation standards. Notifications of certain changes on this annual form may provoke an accreditation review. As part of this review, schools may be required to submit additional documentation.”

Evidence: See p. 9 in ACCS Accreditation Handbook.

Evidence: See p. 9-12 in Iowa Application Materials

Evidence for Question 13.

If other please explain

ACCREDITATION

As an ACCS accredited school you are required to complete the following review.

a. Accreditation Review

Please answer the following question and, if needed, include comments.

Has the school designated a member of the school board, staff, or faculty to review the ACCS accreditation standards (Section 2, Standards) within the past year, and can that person affirm that the school still conforms to the minimal requirements for ACCS accreditation?

- Yes
- No

Comment

Comments for a. Accreditation Review

b. Bylaw Review

Please answer the following question and, if needed, include comments.

Has the school made significant changes to its bylaws since the last accreditation visit? If so please describe those changes.

- Yes
- No

Comment

Comments for b. Bylaw Review

c. Policy Manual Review

Please answer the following question and, if needed, include comments.

Has the school made significant changes to its policy manual since the last visit? If so please describe those changes.

Yes

No

Comment

Comments for c. Policy Manual Review

d. Curriculum Guide Review

Please answer the following question and, if needed, include comments.

Has the school made significant changes to its curriculum guide(s) since the last visit? If so please describe those changes.

Yes

No

Comment

Comments for d. Curriculum Guide Review

e. Teacher Certification Review

Please answer the following question.

As an ACCS-accredited school, you are required to participate in an ACCS teacher certification program. Is the school actively pursuing teacher certification for all full-time (and affected part-time) teachers?

- Yes
- No

f. Head of School Review

Please answer the following question.

Has there been a change to the head of school?

- Yes
- No

g. Grade Levels Review

Please answer the following question.

Has the school added a grade level to the existing division (i.e., adding grade 8 when grades K-7 are already accredited)?

- Yes
- No

h. Online Courses Review

Please answer the following question.

Has the school added online, credit recovery courses?

Yes

No

Any Additional Comments

If you have any additional comments, please add them below.

Comment

Additional comments



[Renewal]

“F. Re-evaluation. All schools accredited by ACCS must undergo regular accreditation renewals in order to retain their accredited status. Schools that were successfully accredited but fall short of the requirements on subsequent renewal visits may be initially placed in a Probationary Status for a fixed amount of time to allow them to correct discrepancies.”

Evidence: See p. 9 in the Accreditation Handbook.

1. “Reapplication. Schools holding accredited status must re-apply within two years following their initial accreditation to maintain this status. Schools may receive renewal accreditation for a period of two or five years, based on the evaluation of the school by the assigned committee and the decision of the ACCS Board of Directors. At the end of this time, they must re-apply for renewal accreditation again in order to maintain their accredited status.” (See section Section H.3, Probationary Status below for information on probation.)

Evidence: See p. 42 in the Accreditation Handbook

Schools receiving initial accreditation must renew within two years. After this, subsequent renewal accreditation may be approved for five years.

Evidence: See pp. 48-50 in the Accreditation Handbook.

14. Describe the process by which you suspend or remove accreditation from a school.

This action would occur during the Substantive Change process, which states in part:

“Substantive change reports should include a brief narrative about the nature of the change, the decision-making process leading to the change, including reference to the strategic plan, any impact on the standards or critical indicators, and the anticipated benefits of the change.

Following a document review and/or site visit, the director of accreditation will make a recommendation to the president. Recommendations will state:

1. Whether the changes are approved or not approved.
2. Whether the school will maintain its regular timeline for accreditation renewal
3. Whether components of accreditation renewal must be received earlier, or if the entire renewal schedule must be changed.

The school will be notified of the specific grounds for any association's adverse action, the specific standard(s) for which there has not been compliance, the nature of the action, and the right of the school to appeal if permitted by, and in accordance with, the appeal procedures in the Accreditation Handbook.”

The evaluation of compliance with the standards implies the potential outcome of suspending a school's accreditation or in extreme cases, removal of accreditation.

See p. 46 in the Accreditation Handbook.

15. Describe any other criteria used by your organization to determine accreditation. The description should include the degree to which a school implements, monitors and makes progress towards goals in its strategic improvement plan and the degree to which the organization gathers, analyzes and uses data to improve student learning and organizational effectiveness.



[Progress toward goals]: Discrepancies

Schools that receive a discrepancy in their accreditation report, MUST demonstrate the correction of these discrepancies by a manner and within the time specified in the report. Discrepancies are defined as:

“1. Major Discrepancy. A major discrepancy is defined as the failure of a school to meet one of the criteria listed in Section E, Criteria for Accreditation. These discrepancies often seriously impair the quality of education.”

“2. Minor Discrepancy. A minor discrepancy is defined as the school not adequately meeting one of the criteria listed in Section E, Criteria for Accreditation. Should the Accreditation Visit Committee or the ACCS Accreditation Committee determine that the accumulation of minor discrepancies is so numerous that their aggregate seriously impairs the quality of education, the sum total may be designated as a major discrepancy.”

Evidence: See p. 47 in the Accreditation Handbook.

[Progress toward goals]: Response to recommendations

As part of the renewal accreditation process, schools must provide a response to each recommendation included in the accreditation report.

“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.

b. Documentation:

i. Provide a letter explaining the correction of each discrepancy and any action taken on each recommendation.

Evidence: See p. 35 in the ACCS Accreditation Handbook.

[Improve student learning and organizational effectiveness]

During site visits, ACCS visit committees place the highest priority on observing classroom instruction. Typically, each member of the visit committee observes each teacher. One day focuses on grammar classrooms and the second day focuses on the upper school.

Visits also include interviews with teachers, students, and administrators.

Evidence: See p. 16, the Visit Schedule included in the Visit Committee Handbook, in the Iowa Application Materials.

I. VISIT SCHEDULE

NOTICE

One of the primary objectives of the visiting accreditation committee is to observe teachers giving typical classroom instruction. The on-site accreditation visit is designed to view the school as it normally operates.

On the dates when the visit is scheduled, the school SHOULD:

- ensure that all core classical courses (i.e., Latin, logic, rhetoric, apologetics, etc.) essential to classical Christian education are taught. If a schedule does not allow for a core class to be observed on the given day (e.g., logic is only offered on Wednesday and the team observes secondary classes on Tuesday), the school should communicate the time for observing the class on the alternate day.
- have teachers leave written lesson plans in the back of the room on the observer's chair.
- if a teacher is ill or there is a substitute the day of the visit, please notify the visit committee chair.

On the dates when the visit is scheduled, the school should NOT:

- have teachers interrupt the natural flow of a lesson to conduct a recitation or recite a memory verse.
 - conduct standardized testing
 - have classes out on field trips
 - have students stand to greet visitors when they enter the room
-

i. Travel Day

- a. Committee travels to school locale and checks into the hotel
- b. Committee meets for planning at hotel in the evening (if time). If not, over breakfast the next morning.

2. First Visit Day

- a. The visit committee arrives at the school about thirty minutes prior to the start of classes.
- b. A school representative shows the visit committee the room that they will be allowed to use as their office space during their visit. Please provide the committee with the password for wireless internet access
- c. The visit committee is provided with a map showing the classrooms. The committee is given a brief tour of the facility. Please point out the restroom to used by team members.
- d. The Head of School will provide all of the documents required to be received upon the visit committee's arrival (see subparagraph J below)
- e. Observe secondary classes at site. Visits may occur any time during school hours.
- f. Interview students @ lunch. Please provide three different rooms. (See note 4. below):
 - One 9th & one 10th grader
 - Two 11th graders
 - Two 12th graders
- g. Meet for one-hour with three full-time secondary school teachers after school (see note d. below)
- h. Meet with upper-school administrator after meeting with teachers
- i. Around 6:00 PM, a dinner meeting with the entire school board and the head of school. The location must allow for one conversation that may be followed by all present. This location could be a meal served at the school, a private home, or a private dining room. The priority is facilitating discussion—an expensive meal is not required or expected. Visit committee members may want to sit together.
- j. On the visit schedule, please list each board member's name, how many years they have served on the board, what board committees they serve on, and the grades of their school-age children.

3. Second Visit Day (For Multi-site schools, these steps will also happen on the first visit day.)

- a. Observe Grammar classes. Visits may occur any time during school hours.
- b. Collaborative Model Schools ONLY: Meet with four to six parents before the meeting with the teachers (see note 4. below). Confirm before arranging parent interviews
- c. After school, meet for one-hour with three full-time elementary school teachers (See note 4. below)

- d. Review paperwork/files/records after lunch
 - e. After meeting with teachers, meet for 45 minutes with the grammar school principal
 - f. After meeting with the teachers, meet for 45 minutes with the head of school
 - g. Committee meets to compare notes/generate the draft report including commendations, recommendations, any discrepancies, and a recommendation for the ACCS Ad-Hoc Committee on the school's accreditation status
4. Return Home Day
- a. Upon completion of the draft report, the committee chairman will meet with the head of school and give a verbal summary of the report, ensuring that all noted discrepancies are mentioned in detail and highlighting some of the commendations and recommendations to the school. He will also inform the head of school of the visit committee's recommendation to the ACCS ad-hoc committee about the school's accreditation status. All visit committee members may attend this meeting.
 - b. The visit committee returns home.

NOTES

1. This is the preferred visit schedule. With the concurrence of the ACCS director of accreditation and the visit committee chairman, the school may modify it to accommodate its specific scheduling needs, but it may not omit any items.
2. If a school does not have grades through 12th grade yet, then select students accordingly in the senior most high school grades (9th, 10th or 11th) to be interviewed by each committee member.
3. The school provides lunches and beverages for both days of the accreditation visit so the visit committee may work through lunchtime.
4. The Head of School is to inform the ACCS director of accreditation and the visit committee two weeks before the on-site visit who will be assigned to the interviews for both teachers and students. Students should not be the children of board members, administrators, or faculty members. Teachers should not be related to board members or administrators.



Last year, the ACCS Commission on Standards for Accreditation focused on the main standard for classroom instruction, Standard E. 1. The standard was retitled and revised to strengthen the description, documentation, and indicators. This effort is designed to improve student learning. The new standard reads:

“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:

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:

Teachers love their students, seeking their spiritual, intellectual, and physical good.

Teachers capitalize on natural opportunities that arise within the lesson to integrate the lesson with Scripture.

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.

Teachers know the material they teach and offer a living example of competency with the material at hand.

Teachers deploy language that students can understand, building from familiar to unfamiliar, with due attention to their maturity, experience, and prior knowledge.

Teachers enjoin students to attend to the material with interest and to participate earnestly in fruitful learning activities.

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.

Teachers leverage the fellowship within a classroom cohort to enjoin students to learn through one another.

Teachers revisit and review material to solidify what was learned previously and also to forge connections to new learning.

In the younger grades, classroom methods emphasize the development and exercise of memory. Memorization should be an essential element of instruction in daily lessons.

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.

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. The instruction features classroom discussions in which students seek truth through dialogue; training in formal and respectful debate; writing assignments that require comparison, contrast, and analysis; and application of logic and knowledge.

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.

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.

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

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.

Teachers call attention to scripture—naturally, with neither triteness or clumsy affectation.

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.

Teachers are well-prepared for the lesson and demonstrate competence in the subject.

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.

Teachers ask questions that elicit thoughtful answers (beyond a simple "yes" or "no"), so that students participate actively and show interest in the lesson.

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.

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.

Lessons include a review of prior material; such reviews are more than mere repetition, they forge new connections or applications

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.

Younger students participate actively through bodily activity, song, and/or recitation.

Students in the middle grades practice logic (i.e., they define, compare, contrast, infer, and analyze) as they discuss, write, debate, and present.

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.



Teachers assess students in rhetorical, critical reasoning, and memory skills in age-appropriate ways across the curriculum.

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.

Lesson plan forms indicating how teachers employ these principles in routine planning.

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.

Classroom observation and teacher evaluation forms, indicating teachers receive routine feedback about their use of these principles.

Training plans and past training records should include material consistent with ACCS accreditation standards for classroom teaching."

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.

Evidence: This is the text of the approved standard. This language will be included in the revised accreditation handbook to be effect for the fall of 2024.

16. How does your organization know that it is effective in accrediting schools?

The cover of the ACCS Accreditation Handbook states "A School Improvement Program for Schools Serving Christ through a Classical Christian Education."

We regularly receive testimony from school administrators who are working through the process the states that their schools are improving as a result.

"Now, some eight months later, I believe I speak for the entire Augustine School staff when I say that any improvements we thought we might realize through the Self Study process have been multiplied many times beyond our expectations. By interacting with the accreditation standards in this way, we have already identified gaps in our policies, areas of complacency, and new frontiers for improvement that we may never have gotten to on our own."

Evidence: See page 19, a letter from Augustine School, seeking initial accreditation, in Iowa Application Materials.

Evidence for Question 16.

AUGUSTINE  SCHOOL

April 25, 2023

Association of Classical and Christian Schools
P.O. Box 9741
317 W. Sixth Street
Suite 211
Moscow, ID 83843

Dear ACCS Staff and Site Team members,

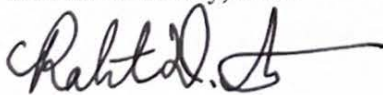
With high hopes and more than a little curiosity, we humbly submit our Self Study as the next step in our journey toward accreditation with ACCS. We commenced work on the accompanying project last Fall knowing that it would be a significant effort for our relatively small staff but expecting that effort to more than pay for itself in benefits to our entire school community. Little did we know back then how much we would learn about ourselves as we responded to the ACCS accreditation standards and reflected on our own practices and commitments.

Now, some eight months later, I believe I speak for the entire Augustine School staff when I say that any improvements we thought we might realize through the Self Study process have been multiplied many times beyond our expectations. By interacting with the accreditation standards in this way, we have already identified gaps in our policies, areas of complacency, and new frontiers for improvement that we may never have gotten to on our own.

Our enthusiasm for this journey is now higher than ever as we anticipate the next steps. If the review of our Self Study and subsequent site visit are anywhere near as productive and helpful as the Self Study preparation, we have much to learn about ourselves and our community in the months ahead.

We have submitted both a hard copy of our Self Study and a soft copy (via Google Drive) for your convenience. If you have any questions or if there is anything we can do to facilitate your review of our documents, please feel free to contact us. Many blessings to the staff at ACCS and all the member schools bringing classical Christian education to the children of our country.

Gratefully,
Robert D. Stacey, Ph.D



Head of School



The effectiveness of our accreditation program may also be seen in the increasing number of schools seeking initial accreditation status. We currently have 17 accredited schools and a number of inquiries from international schools.

Evidence: See <https://classicalchristian.org/accreditation-candidates>



Section D. Organization Structure, Citations and Audits

Questions 17-32 are focused on your organization's overall fiscal, data and contract management procedures, as well as applicable citations/audit results.

17. Describe your organization's fiscal, data and contract management policies and procedures.

ACCS is a member of the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability (ECFA)

Evidence: See <https://www.ecfa.org/MemberProfile.aspx?ID=30397>

Fiscal Management:

Budgeting: Annual financial planning with quarterly reviews. Budget approval by the board of trustees.

Financial Reporting: Regular preparation and review of financial statements.

Internal Controls: Implementation of controls such as segregation of duties, approval authority, reconciliation procedures, cost accounting, regular audits

Data Management:

Data Handling: Data is collected in compliance with applicable laws and educational standards. We utilize secure, encrypted databases to store sensitive information, ensuring confidentiality and integrity of data.

Access and Sharing: Controlled data access and regulated sharing in line with privacy laws.

Retention and Disposal: Adherence to regulatory and legal data retention periods and secure disposal procedures.

Contract Management:

Contract Processes: Legal and policy-compliant contract development and approval.

Monitoring and Evaluation: Ongoing performance monitoring and contract effectiveness evaluation.

Renewal and Termination: Clear procedures for timely contract renewal and termination decisions.

18. Are there any uncorrected citations of noncompliance by any governmental or nongovernmental agency or organization with jurisdiction or oversight of your organization, including any order entered in a contested case before an administrative agency?

- Yes. Provide evidence.
- No.

No, there are not.

19. Does your organization have any negative audit findings in the last 5 years?

- Yes. Describe.
- No.

No, we have not.



20. If the answer to Item 20 was "yes," Has your organization corrected each of the audit findings?

- Yes. Describe.
- No. Explain
- N/A

21. Has any state or federal court of competent jurisdiction entered any judgments, orders, decrees, verdicts, or injunctions against your organization, whether a claim or a counterclaim, in the last 5 years?

- Yes. Describe.
- No.

No, they have not.

22. If the answer to Item 21 was "yes," please give the present status of any judgment, order, decree, verdict, or injunction against your organization, whether a claim or a counterclaim.



Section E. Additional Information

23. Describe any other reports or findings sent to the nonpublic school regarding accreditation, including findings related to Iowa Code section 256.11 as amended by 2013 Iowa Acts, House File 215, section 89.

None.

24. Indicate the number of schools your organization accredits.

We currently have 64 accredited schools.

Evidence: See the list here: <https://classicalchristian.org/accredited-member-schools/>

25. List the states in which your organization provides accreditation.

We offer accreditation in all 50 states. We do not yet have accredited schools in every state.

We have candidate and accredited schools in 27 states including: AL, AZ, CA, CO, DE, FL, GA, IA, ID, IN, KS, MD, MI, MN, MO, MT, NC, OH, OK, OR, PA, SC, TN, TX, VA, WA, and WV.

Evidence: See <https://classicalchristian.org/accredited-member-schools/>

26. Describe your working relationships with other state departments of education.

A. Indiana, State Board of Education. On November 10, 2021, the Indiana State Board of Education approved our application for recognition as a third-party accrediting organization.

Evidence: See Recognized Accrediting Organizations: <https://www.in.gov/sboe/sboe-recognized-accrediting-organizations/>

B. Tennessee, State Board of Education. In 2014, we sought and received recognition for Category II. In 2019, our request for renewal was approved and in November, 2023, I submitted the documentation required for another renewal. My contact is Diana Burton, Director of Non-Public School Programs.

Evidence: See list of Category II accrediting agencies: <https://www.tn.gov/education/families/school-options/non-public-schools/non-public-school-categories.html>

27. What school improvement tools, resources and expertise does your organization provide for its member schools?

ACCS holds a number of events for school members including an annual conference, regional conferences and other training courses.

Evidence: See <https://classicalchristian.org/events-and-training/>

A. Annual Conference. See <https://repairingtheruins.org/>



B. Regional Administrator Conferences. See <https://classicalchristian.org/regional-administrative-summits/>

C. Auxilium Conference. Hosted by a member schools, designed for start-up schools. See <https://classicalchristian.org/accs-auxilium/>

D. Webinars. Here is one example:

Recognition and Modification: What's New in ACCS Accreditation

October 19, 2023, 02:00 PM Eastern Time

E. FORUM. This is an online bulletin board where personnel of member schools may ask questions of other school members. (Password protected)

F. Member's Resource Center (Password protected). This site includes job exchange, curriculum center, toolbox, library, certifications and training and student services. Below is a screenshot of the MRC headings.



28. Describe the applicant's stakeholder involvement in the accreditation process

On the first day of our annual conference, we host a meeting with the heads of schools from our Accredited Schools. School administrators are able to ask questions or provide comments to the ACCS. President and Director of Accreditation during this meeting.



Evidence: See p. 20, 2023 Conference Schedule, in the Iowa Application Materials

MAIN CONFERENCE: DAY 1



Evidence for Question 28.

THURSDAY, JUNE 22

Ad: Administrators | LR: Logic/Rhetoric
G: Grammar | P: Practicum
F: Foundations | TP: Track Plenary

TIME/ROOM	EVENT	SPEAKER
8:00–8:30 Grand Ballroom	DEVOTIONS	George Grant
9:00–9:30 Grand Ballroom	WELCOME & OPENING	
9:30–10:30 Grand Ballroom 1	PLENARY: Tombs of the Prophets	Douglas Wilson
10:50–11:50	WORKSHOPS:	
Grand Ballroom 3	L/R Christians Are Re-Readers	Rosaria Butterfield
Grand Ballroom 4	F (A) The Classical Imagination: The How, What, and Why of Classical Education	Craig Hefner
Sterlings 2 & 3	G The What and Why of Teaching Grammar	Tammy Peters
Sterlings 1	G Excellence in Bible Teaching in the Grammar School	Barbara Hansen
Smithfield	All Augustine's De Magistro: Teaching, Learning, Signs, and God	David Diener
Birmingham	Ad Leading Teacher Training from the Back of the Room	Bryan Lynch
Ft. Pitt	Ad Completing the Trivium is a Must	Andrew Smalley
Heinz	L/R Launching Apologetics in the Mind of a 16-Year Old	Phil Arant
Grand Ballroom 1/2	L/R TRACK PLENARY: The Idolatrous Eye: How to Recognize and Respond Rightly to Beauty in a Fallen World	Cole Jeffrey
12:00–1:15	LUNCH & VENDOR TIME	
12:15–1:00 Heinz	LUNCH MEETING for Heads of ACCS Accredited and Candidate Schools	David Goodwin
1:15–1:30 Grand Ballroom	SINGING AND ANNOUNCEMENTS	
1:30–2:30 Grand Ballroom	PLENARY: Five Lies of our Anti-Christian Age	Rosaria Butterfield
2:30–4:00 Hospitality Suite	HEAD OF SCHOOL WIVES TEA	
2:50–3:50	WORKSHOPS:	
Grand Ballroom 3	G The Crack in the Marble Jar, 2.0	Feeney & Kilmer
Grand Ballroom 4	Ad Stop Writing Strategic Plans and Start Thinking Strategically	Vince Burens
Sterlings 2 & 3	G Music Literacy in Action: Setting the Foundation for Joyful Music Making	Kara Faraldi
Sterlings 1	All The Integration of Virtue: Spiritual Formation and Learning	Hopkins & Radcliff
Smithfield	L/R Those Who Teach, Know: Utilizing "Dialogue" as a Form of Assessment	Schinetsky & Shaunessy
Birmingham	All How does Science Fit into a Classical Education?	Charles Dewberry
Ft. Pitt	L/R Teaching Art in Christian Classical Schools: One Art Teacher's Journey!	Scott Maynard
Heinz	L/R Practical Progymnasmata: Making Use of an Ancient Rhetorical Masterclass	Jason Modar
Grand Ballroom 1/2	F (A)TP TRACK PLENARY: Scriptural Integraton	Douglas Wilson
4:10–5:10	WORKSHOPS:	
Grand Ballroom 3	G Writing in the Grammar Stage—Engaging in the Beauty	Tammy Peters
Grand Ballroom 4	F (A) Directing Affections to Beauty	Caleb Sasser
Sterlings 2 & 3	G The Grammar School Day: A Liturgy	Terri Covil
Smithfield	Ad Event Planning: An Important Piece of Your Development Strategy	Gene Liechty
Birmingham	Ad Dealing with Public Controversy	Robert Stacey
Ft. Pitt	All All the World's a Screen: Shakespeare and Social Media	Cole Jeffrey
Heinz	L/R Get Your Students Reading Latin	Joseph Roberts
Sterlings 1	L/R A Christian Response to Classical Rhetoric	Andrew Kern
Grand Ballroom 1/2	TP TRACK PLENARY: Part I: The Early Church from Christ to Constantine	Louis Markos
7:30–8:30 Grand Ballroom 1/2	TP ACCS NATIONAL HONOR CHOIR, Presented by NSA	



Changes to the accreditation standards are first sent for comment to administrators at our accredited schools.

“7. Notify accredited and candidate schools of changes to the standards via email. Changes will also be posted in the MeRC. Review. An ACCS Accreditation Committee, appointed by the president, will periodically review the ACCS accreditation standards. The objective of this review will be to make any recommendations to the ACCS Board that will improve the ACCS accreditation process and procedures. The appointed committee may seek additional input from others not assigned, including, but not limited to, ACCS member schools that have been through the ACCS accreditation process.”

Evidence: See p. 51, Review and Change Procedures, in the ACCS accreditation handbook.

29. Describe the ongoing professional development requirements for those in the organization who assess a school's performance on the accreditation standards.

The director of accreditation serves as on the board of the Virginia Council for Private Education (VCPE). He has served on the finance committee and the accreditation committee. He currently serves as treasurer.

In Fall 2022, the director of accreditation represented VCPE as an observer on an ACSI accreditation visit.

Evidence: See <https://www.vcpe.org/board-of-directors/>

The director of accreditation also represents the association during meetings of the National Council for Private School Accreditation (NCPA).

Evidence: See ACCS listed as a member organization here: <https://ncpsa.org/about-us/>

The director of accreditation regularly attends the Private School Leadership Conference hosted by the U. S. Department of Education's Office of Non-Public Education.

The collaborations with these organization provides ongoing training for matters of school accreditation.

Evidence: See p. 21, 2023 Private School Leadership Conference, if the Iowa Application Materials.



Tom Spencer <tspencer@accsedu.org>

Tentative Topics 2023 National Private School Leadership Conference Message

1 message

ONPE Events <ONPEevents@ed.gov>

Thu, Jul 20, 2023 at 12:54 PM

To: "Allen, Pamela" <Pamela.Allen@ed.gov>, "Velez-Anderson, Michele" <MiSchele.Velez-Anderson@ed.gov>

Evidence for Question 29.



Office of
Non-Public
Education

Tentative Topics Announced!

2023 National Private School Leadership Conference

Date: Wednesday, September 13, 2023

We are pleased to share the tentative topics on deck for the 2023 National Private School Leadership Conference! Join us for the U.S. Department of Education's signature event for key stakeholders in the nonpublic school community!

WHAT: 2023 National Private School Leadership Conference ([REGISTER](#))

WHEN: Wednesday, September 13, 2023

9:00 AM to 4:00 PM (ET)

WHERE: U.S. Department of Education ([directions](#))

400 Maryland Ave, SW

Washington, DC 20202

TENTATIVE TOPICS

ESEA Title VIII Equitable Services Guidance

Michael Thompson Discusses Working with Today's Independent School Parents

National Center for Education: New Statistics and Updates

PROGRESS Center Private School Educators in Residence (OSEP Funded Grant)



30. Indicate your organization's beginning date and ending date of your fiscal year.

The fiscal year begins January 1 and ends December 31.

31. Provide your organization's most recent end-of-year financial statement.

The most recent financial statement is provided.

Evidence: See pp. 23-39 of the Iowa Application Materials

Evidence for Question 31.

ASSOCIATION OF CLASSICAL & CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS, INC.

Moscow, Idaho

Reviewed Financial Statements
For the Years Ended
December 31, 2022 and 2021

ASSOCIATION OF CLASSICAL & CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS, INC.
Moscow, Idaho

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>PAGE</u>
Independent Accountant’s Review Report	1-2
Statements of Financial Position	3
Statements of Activities	4-5
Statements of Functional Expenses.....	6-7
Statements of Cash Flows.....	8
Notes to the Financial Statements	9-15



INDEPENDENT ACCOUNTANT'S REVIEW REPORT

Board of Trustees
Association of Classical and Christian Schools, Inc.
Moscow, Idaho 83843

We have reviewed the accompanying financial statements of Association of Classical and Christian Schools, Inc. (a nonprofit organization) which comprise the statements of financial position as of December 31, 2022 and 2021, and the related statements of activities, functional expenses and cash flows for the years then ended, and the related notes. A review includes primarily applying analytical procedures to management's financial data and making inquiries of Association management. A review is substantially less in scope than an audit, the objective of which is the expression of an opinion regarding the financial statements as a whole. Accordingly, we do not express such an opinion.

Management's Responsibility for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of these financial statements in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America; this includes the design, implementation, and maintenance of internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements that are free from material misstatement whether due to fraud or error.

Accountant's Responsibility

Our responsibility is to conduct the review engagement in accordance with Statements on Standards for Accounting and Review promulgated by the Accounting and Review Services Committee of the AICPA. Those standards require us to perform procedures to obtain limited assurance as a basis for reporting whether we are aware of any material modifications that should be made to the financial statements for them to be in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America. We believe that the results of our procedures provide a reasonable basis for our conclusion.

We are required to be independent of the Association of Classical and Christian Schools, Inc. and to meet our other ethical responsibilities, in accordance with the relevant ethical requirements related to our review.



Accountant's Conclusion

Based on our review, we are not aware of any material modifications that should be made to the accompanying financial statements in order for them to be in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

Hayden Ross, PLLC

Moscow, Idaho

May 10, 2023

ASSOCIATION OF CLASSICAL & CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS, INC.
Moscow, Idaho

STATEMENTS OF FINANCIAL POSITION
December 31, 2022 and 2021

	2022	2021
ASSETS		
Current Assets		
Cash in checking and savings	1,890,324	1,706,638
Investments	75,941	90,734
Accounts receivable (net of allowance of \$843 and \$355, respectively)	27,251	11,485
Prepaid expenses	10,314	9,988
Due from IRS - ERC	17,175	32,793
Total Current Assets	2,021,005	1,851,638
Property and Equipment		
Furniture, fixtures and equipment	15,375	12,676
Accumulated depreciation	(11,502)	(9,715)
Right-of-use asset	55,191	-
Accumulated amortization	(7,339)	-
Total Property and Equipment	51,725	2,961
TOTAL ASSETS	\$ 2,072,730	\$ 1,854,599
LIABILITIES		
Current Liabilities		
Accounts payable	2,000	5,000
Credit cards payable	7,713	5,561
Unearned revenue	714,964	659,525
Right-of-use liability, due within one year	8,943	-
Total Current Liabilities	733,620	670,086
Long-Term Liabilities		
Right-of-use liability, due after one year	38,909	-
Total Liabilities	772,529	670,086
NET ASSETS		
Without donor restrictions	1,300,201	1,184,513
With donor restrictions	-	-
Total Net Assets	1,300,201	1,184,513
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	\$ 2,072,730	\$ 1,854,599

ASSOCIATION OF CLASSICAL & CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS, INC.
Moscow, Idaho

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES
For the Year Ended December 31, 2022

	<u>Without Donor Restrictions</u>	<u>With Donor Restrictions</u>	<u>Total</u>
Operating revenues and gains			
Conference income	496,300	-	496,300
Contributions	310,250	-	310,250
Membership dues and application fees	560,867	-	560,867
Royalties	2,587	-	2,587
Accreditation fees	104,280	-	104,280
Materials and services	36,727	-	36,727
Publishing revenue	94,263	-	94,263
Other revenue	115,783	-	115,783
Total operating revenues and gains	<u>1,721,057</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,721,057</u>
Net assets released from restrictions			
Restrictions satisfied by payments	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Operating expenses and losses			
Program Services	1,295,130	-	1,295,130
Management and General	295,684	-	295,684
Fundraising	-	-	-
Total operating expenses and losses	<u>1,590,814</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,590,814</u>
Operating income (loss)	<u>130,243</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>130,243</u>
Non-operating revenues (expenses)			
Interest income	141	-	141
Dividend income	97	-	97
Investment income (loss)	(243)	-	(243)
Unrealized gain (loss)	(14,550)	-	(14,550)
Total non-operating revenues (expenses)	<u>(14,555)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(14,555)</u>
Change in Net Assets	115,688	-	115,688
Net Assets - Beginning	<u>1,184,513</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,184,513</u>
Net Assets - Ending	<u>\$ 1,300,201</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ 1,300,201</u>

ASSOCIATION OF CLASSICAL & CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS, INC.
Moscow, Idaho

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES
For the Year Ended December 31, 2021

	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total
Operating revenues and gains			
Conference income	372,784	-	372,784
Contributions	351,607	-	351,607
Membership dues and application fees	437,782	-	437,782
Royalties	1,591	-	1,591
Accreditation fees	65,079	-	65,079
Materials and services	20,696	-	20,696
Publishing revenue	67,001	-	67,001
Extinguishment of debt - PPP and PPP 2	151,600	-	151,600
Other revenue	89,957	-	89,957
Total operating revenues and gains	<u>1,558,097</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,558,097</u>
Net assets released from restrictions			
Restrictions satisfied by payments	-	-	-
Operating expenses and losses			
Program Services	965,945	-	965,945
Management and General	202,724	-	202,724
Fundraising	5,378	-	5,378
Total operating expenses and losses	<u>1,174,047</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,174,047</u>
Operating income (loss)	<u>384,050</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>384,050</u>
Non-operating revenues			
Interest income	120	-	120
Dividend income	406	-	406
Total non-operating revenues	<u>526</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>526</u>
Change in Net Assets	384,576	-	384,576
Net Assets - Beginning	<u>799,937</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>799,937</u>
Net Assets - Ending	<u>\$ 1,184,513</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ 1,184,513</u>

ASSOCIATION OF CLASSICAL & CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS, INC.

Moscow, Idaho

STATEMENT OF FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES

For the Year Ended December 31, 2022

	<u>Program Services</u>	<u>Management & General</u>	<u>Fundraising</u>	<u>Total</u>
Conferences:				
Meetings (board expenses)	-	2,316	-	2,316
Conference costs	308,113	-	-	308,113
Accreditation:				
Accreditation costs	98,063	-	-	98,063
Projects:				
Member services	14,818	-	-	14,818
Web development	94,590	-	-	94,590
Operating Expenses:				
Accounting	-	3,900	-	3,900
Advertising and promotion	55,737	-	-	55,737
Computer services and supplies	12,255	5,252	-	17,507
Depreciation	-	1,787	-	1,787
Employee compensation	387,733	191,654	-	579,387
Employee benefits	107,339	11,927	-	119,266
Liability insurance	535	4,810	-	5,345
Merchant card fees	3,554	1,523	-	5,077
Miscellaneous	-	148	-	148
Other contracted services	59,877	39,918	-	99,795
Payroll taxes	30,944	15,295	-	46,239
Postage and shipping	2,287	980	-	3,267
Publishing expenses	35,135	-	-	35,135
Rent	2,574	1,103	-	3,677
Lease expense	5,635	2,415	-	8,050
Supplies	7,857	3,367	-	11,224
Telephone	2,279	976	-	3,255
Travel and meals	65,805	7,312	-	73,117
Utilities	-	1,001	-	1,001
Total Expenses	<u>\$ 1,295,130</u>	<u>\$ 295,684</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ 1,590,814</u>

ASSOCIATION OF CLASSICAL & CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS, INC.

Moscow, Idaho

**STATEMENT OF FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES
For the Year Ended December 31, 2021**

	<u>Program Services</u>	<u>Management & General</u>	<u>Fundraising</u>	<u>Total</u>
Conferences:				
Meetings (board expenses)	-	14,964	-	14,964
Conference costs	309,591	-	-	309,591
Accreditation:				
Accreditation costs	40,700	-	-	40,700
Projects:				
Member services	49,909	-	-	49,909
Web development	65,664	-	-	65,664
Operating Expenses:				
Accounting	-	4,525	-	4,525
Advertising and promotion	3,963	-	-	3,963
Computer services and supplies	8,158	3,496	-	11,654
Depreciation	-	2,357	-	2,357
Employee compensation	256,458	88,888	-	345,346
Employee benefits	67,972	7,553	-	75,525
Liability insurance	325	2,921	-	3,246
Merchant card fees	1,991	853	-	2,844
Miscellaneous	1,850	2,921	-	4,771
Other contracted services	84,484	56,322	-	140,806
Payroll taxes	22,784	7,897	-	30,681
Postage and shipping	2,374	1,018	-	3,392
Publishing expenses	20,685	-	-	20,685
Rent	7,233	3,100	-	10,333
Supplies	4,696	2,012	-	6,708
Telephone	2,024	867	-	2,891
Travel	15,084	1,676	5,378	22,138
Utilities	-	1,354	-	1,354
Total Expenses	<u>\$ 965,945</u>	<u>\$ 202,724</u>	<u>\$ 5,378</u>	<u>\$ 1,174,047</u>

ASSOCIATION OF CLASSICAL & CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS, INC.

Moscow, Idaho

STATEMENTS OF CASH FLOWS
For the Years Ended December 31, 2022 and 2021

	<u>2022</u>	<u>2021</u>
CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES		
Cash received from members	545,101	592,271
Cash received from program participants	551,739	372,784
Cash received from royalty fees	2,587	1,591
Cash received for publishing	94,263	67,001
Cash received for contributions	310,250	260,873
Cash received for services provided	256,790	168,091
Cash received from ERC	15,618	-
Payments to employees	(698,653)	(420,871)
Payment for payroll and sales taxes	(46,239)	(63,474)
Payment of conference costs	(308,113)	(309,591)
Payments for other operating expenses	(537,196)	(434,405)
Net Cash Provided By (Used In) Operating Activities	<u>186,147</u>	<u>234,270</u>
CASH FLOW FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES		
Interest and dividend earnings	238	526
Net Cash Provided By (Used In) Investing Activities	<u>238</u>	<u>526</u>
CASH FLOW FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES		
Purchase of capital assets	(2,699)	-
Cash proceeds from PPP loan	-	75,800
Net Cash Provided By (Used In) Investing Activities	<u>(2,699)</u>	<u>75,800</u>
NET CHANGE IN CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS	183,686	310,596
CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS - BEGINNING	<u>1,706,638</u>	<u>1,396,042</u>
CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS - ENDING	<u>\$ 1,890,324</u>	<u>\$ 1,706,638</u>
RECONCILIATION OF CHANGE IN NET ASSETS TO NET CASH PROVIDED BY OPERATING ACTIVITIES		
Operating income (loss)	130,243	384,050
Extinguishment of debt - PPP and PPP2	-	(151,600)
Contributions - donated stock	-	(90,734)
Depreciation	1,787	2,357
Decrease (increase) in assets:		
Accounts receivable	(15,766)	(7,641)
Prepaid expenses	(326)	(831)
Due from IRS - ERC	15,618	(32,793)
Increase (decrease) in liabilities:		
Accounts payable	(3,000)	(21,448)
Credit cards	2,152	(1,579)
Unearned revenue	55,439	154,489
Net Cash Provided By Operating Activities	<u>\$ 186,147</u>	<u>\$ 234,270</u>
Supplemental Information:		
Non-cash investing/financing activities:		
Extinguishment of debt - PPP and PPP2	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ 151,600</u>

ASSOCIATION OF CLASSICAL & CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS, INC.
Moscow, Idaho

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
December 31, 2022 and 2021

NOTE 1 Nature of Operations and Significant Accounting Policies

The Organization was formed in October 1993 for the purpose of the accreditation of Christian schools and the education of their management. There are currently over 230 member schools and over 100 affiliate members. The Organization was granted tax-exempt status by the Internal Revenue Service on September 15, 2000.

Basis of Presentation - The financial statements of the Organization have been prepared on the accrual basis of accounting. These financial statements have been prepared to focus on the Association as a whole and to present balances and transactions according to the existence or absence of donor-imposed restrictions. The Organization's net assets are segregated into the following net asset groups:

Net assets without donor restrictions - Net assets not subject to donor-imposed restrictions.

Net assets with donor restrictions - Net assets subject to donor-imposed restrictions.

Revenues are reported as increases in the net assets without donor restrictions unless use of the related assets is limited by donor-imposed restrictions. Expenses are reported as decreases in net assets without donor restrictions. Expirations of donor restricted net assets (i.e., the donor-stipulated purpose has been fulfilled) are reported as reclassifications from net assets with donor restrictions to net assets without donor restrictions. The Organization has a policy of examining and monitoring the contributions with donor-imposed restrictions. On an annual basis, the Organization determines if the donor-stipulated purposes have been fulfilled. In a year when donor-imposed restricted net assets are received and fulfilled, the statement of activities reports the operating revenues and gains increase, with the fulfillment reported as satisfaction of program restrictions.

Revenue Recognition - FASB Accounting Standards Codification (ASC) 958, *Not-for-Profit Entities*, provides accounting guidance specific for not-for-profit entities. Specifically, ACS 958-605, provides revenue recognition guidance for both contributions transactions and exchange transactions. During 2020, Accounting Standards Update (ASU) 2014-09, *Revenue from Contracts with Customers* became effective. The ASU amended the FASB ASC by creating FASB ASC 606, *Revenues from Contracts with Customers*. FASB ASC 606 is applicable to transactions in which a contract is established with a customer to transfer goods or services (an exchange transaction). As a not-for-profit entity, the Organization is potentially subject to both ACS 958 and ACS 606 in relation to revenue recognition. The Organization has reviewed the nature of the transactions entered into during the year and determined both contribution and exchange transactions occurred.

NOTE 1 Nature of Operations and Significant Accounting Policies (Continued)

Under FASB ASC 958-605, *Not-for-Profit Entities-Revenue Recognition*, contributions are recognized as revenue in the period the payment is made by the donor. Contributions of assets other than cash are recorded at their estimated fair value at the date of gift. Contributions received are recorded as net assets with or without donor restrictions depending on the existence or nature of any donor restrictions.

The following were identified as exchange transactions and subject to FASB ASC 606 by the Organization:

Membership dues and application fees – Private Christian schools can become members of the Organization by paying annual dues. These dues include many member benefits including resources online for schools providing Christian education. Dues income is recognized over the member year, which corresponds with the Organization’s fiscal year. Any dues received before the beginning of the calendar year are recorded as unearned revenue. The Organization’s performance obligations are considered satisfied at December 31 of any given year.

Conference income – The Organization organizes an annual conference in the summertime. Registration fees are received and recognized at the conclusion of the conference, which is when the performance obligation is satisfied.

Publishing revenue – Individuals and schools can subscribe to publications through the Organization by paying an annual fee. This revenue is recognized over the Organization’s fiscal year, which is when the performance obligation is satisfied.

Accreditation fees – Private Christian schools can receive accreditation by the Organization. Schools are accredited based on several requirements. Schools are charged a fee for accreditation and this revenue is recognized at the point the school receives its certification. Fees received in advance of the accreditation year are recorded as unearned revenue until recognized.

Cash and Cash Equivalents - All cash, deposits and investments with a maturity of less than three months are included as “cash and cash equivalents” within the statement of financial position and statement of cash flows.

Investments - Investments are reported at cost, if purchased, or at fair value, if donated. Thereafter, investments are reported at their fair values in the statements of financial position, and changes in fair value are reported as investment return in the statement of activities. Purchases and sales of securities are reflected on a trade-basis. Gains and losses on sales of securities are based on average cost and are recorded in the statements of activities in the period in which the securities are sold. Interest is recorded when earning. Dividends are accrued as of the ex-dividend date.

NOTE 1 Nature of Operations and Significant Accounting Policies (Continued)

Fair Value Measurements - Fair value is defined as the price that would be received to sell an asset in the principal or most advantageous market for the asset in an orderly transaction between market participants on the measurement date. Fair value should be based on the assumptions market participants would use when pricing an asset. US GAAP establishes a fair value hierarchy that prioritizes investments based on those assumptions. The fair value hierarchy gives the highest priority to quoted prices in active markets (observable inputs) and the lowest priority to an entity's assumptions (unobservable inputs). The Organization groups assets at fair value in three levels, based on the markets in which the assets and liabilities are traded and the reliability of the assumptions used to determine fair value. These levels are:

Level 1 Inputs to the valuation methodology are unadjusted quoted prices for identical assets or liabilities in active markets the Organization has the ability to access.

Level 2 Inputs to the valuation methodology include quoted prices for similar assets or liabilities in active markets; quoted prices for identical or similar assets or liabilities in inactive markets; inputs other than quoted prices that are observable for the asset or liability; and inputs that are derived principally from or corroborated by observable market data by correlation or other means. If the asset or liability has a specified (contractual) term, the Level 2 input must be observable for substantially the full term of the asset or liability.

Level 3 Inputs to the valuation methodology are unobservable and significant to the fair value measurement.

Allowance for Uncollectible Amounts - The Organization has determined an allowance percentage of 3% to be recorded annually. The total allowance is \$843 and \$355 as of December 31, 2022 and 2021, respectively.

Unearned Revenue - Membership dues and accreditation fees are for the periods January through December. During the year, dues and fees are received that are for the subsequent year. These revenues are deferred as unearned revenue to be recognized in the year in which they are earned. As of December 31, 2022 and 2021 the balance of unearned revenue was \$714,964 and \$659,525, respectively.

Income Taxes and Investment Tax Credits - The Organization was granted tax-exempt status by the Internal Revenue Service under Code Section 501(c)(3) on September 15, 2000. However, the Organization is subject to federal and state income taxes on the net profit generated from unrelated business activity.

The Organization's Form 990, *Return of Organization Exempt from Income Tax*, for the years ending 2020, 2021 and 2022 are subject to examination by the IRS, generally for three years after they were filed.

NOTE 1 Nature of Operations and Significant Accounting Policies (Continued)

Compensated Absences and Retirement - Organization employees are granted sick leave as needed. There is no policy to recognize sick pay earned or for other compensated absences based on length of service or other factors. The Organization does not sponsor a retirement plan.

Estimates - The preparation of financial statements in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect certain reported amounts and disclosures. Accordingly, actual results could differ from those estimates.

Functional Expenses - The Organization allocates its expenses on a functional basis among its various programs and supporting services. Expenses that can be identified with a specific program or supporting service are allocated directly. Various statistical bases allocate other expenses common to several functions.

Subsequent Events - Subsequent events have been evaluated through the date of the review report. This is the date the financial statements were available to be issued. The Organization has concluded that no material subsequent events have occurred.

NOTE 2 Cash

The Organization considers all highly liquid investments with an initial maturity of three months or less to be cash equivalents. Deposits at US Bank are insured by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) up to \$250,000. At times, balances with financial institutions exceed federally insured limits in varying amounts due to the timing of receipts and disbursements of cash and could constitute a concentration of credit risk.

NOTE 3 Investments

The Organization's investments consist of shares of IShares MSCI EAFE Value Fund, Vanguard FTSE Developed Markets Fund, Vanguard Growth Fund, and American Tax Exempt Bond Fund of America, which were all donated during the current year. The fair market value of the shares at December 31, 2022 and 2021 were \$75,941 and \$90,734, respectively. All were considered level 1 investments.

NOTE 4 Property and Equipment

The Organization's policy is to capitalize an asset if the cost of an individual item is greater than \$1,000. The Organization's property and equipment are reported at historical cost. Contributed property and equipment are reported at their estimated fair value at the time of their donation. Such donations are reported as unrestricted support unless the donor has restricted the donated asset to a specific purpose. Assets donated with explicit restrictions regarding their use and contributions of cash that must be used to acquire property and equipment are reported as restricted support. Absent donor stipulations regarding how long those donated assets must be maintained, the Organization reports expirations of donor

NOTE 4 Property and Equipment (Continued)

restrictions when the donated or acquired assets are placed in service as instructed by the donor. The Organization reclassifies net assets with donor restrictions to net assets without donor restrictions at that time.

The Organization reports gifts of land, building, and equipment without donor restrictions unless explicit donor stipulations specify how the donated assets must be used. Gifts of long-lived assets with explicit restrictions that specify how the assets are to be used and gifts of cash or other assets that must be used to acquire long-lived assets are reported as net assets with donor restrictions.

All capital assets other than land and construction in progress are depreciated by the straight-line method of depreciation, including furniture and equipment at 5 years.

NOTE 5 Right-of-Use Lease Asset/Liability

During the year ended December 31, 2022, the Organization adopted new accounting guidance by implementing the provision of FASB ASC 842, *Leases*, which establishes criteria for identifying and reporting right-of-use lease assets and lease liabilities. The implementation of this statement has resulted in a change in the presentation of the financial statements for the following activities:

- The building lease has been restated as a right-of-use asset and right-of-use liabilities.

The restatement has no effect on beginning retained earnings.

The property located at 317 W 6th St, Suite 211 in Moscow are leased from Acadia Property Management, LLC. The current lease commenced on March 1, 2022 and expires on February 28, 2025, with an option to renew for an additional 3-year period with a discount rate of 1.67%. The lease calls for payments of \$805 per month. Total lease paid was \$8,050 for the year ended December 31, 2022.

During the year ended December 31, 2022, the following changes occurred in right-of-use lease assets:

	<u>Beginning of Year</u>	<u>Additions</u>	<u>Modifications & Remeasurements</u>	<u>Subtractions</u>	<u>End of Year</u>
Right-of-Use Lease Assets					
Buildings	-	55,191	-	-	55,191
Less: Accumulated Amortization					
Buildings	-	(7,339)	-	-	(7,339)
Total Right-of-Use Lease Assets, net	<u>-</u>	<u>\$47,852</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>\$47,852</u>

NOTE 5 Right-of-Use Lease Asset/Liability (Continued)

Total lease expense for the year ended December 31, 2022 is as follows:

Lease expense	
Amortization expense by class of underlying asset	
Buildings	7,339
Total amortization expense	<u><u>\$7,339</u></u>

During the year ended December 31, 2022, the following changes occurred in the right-of-use lease liability:

	Beginning of Year	Additions	Modifications & Remeasurements	Subtractions	End of Year	Amounts Due Within One Year
Right-of-use Lease Liabilities						
Buildings	\$-	\$54,386	\$-	\$(6,534)	\$47,852	\$8,943

Future minimum annual payments as of December 31, 2022 are as follows:

FY Ending December 31	Total Payments
2023	9,660
2024	9,660
2025	9,660
2026	9,660
2027	9,660
Remaining years	1,610
Total payments	<u>\$49,910</u>
Present value discount	<u>(2,058)</u>
Total right-of-use liabilities	<u><u>\$47,852</u></u>

NOTE 6 Net Assets With Donor Restrictions

Net assets with donor restrictions are restricted for the following purposes or periods:

	<u>2022</u>	<u>2021</u>
Total Net Assets with Donor Restrictions	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>

NOTE 7 Liquidity

The Organization has \$2,010,691 of financial assets available within one year of the balance sheet date to meet cash needs for general expenditure consisting of cash of \$1,890,324, investments of \$75,941, receivable from the IRS of \$17,175 and accounts receivable net of allowance of \$27,251 as of December 31, 2022. None of the financial assets are subject to donor or other contractual restrictions that make them unavailable for general expenditure within one year of the balance sheet date. The accounts receivable are subject to implied time restrictions but are expected to be collected within one year. The Organization has a goal to maintain financial assets, which consist of cash, on hand to meet 60 days of normal operating expenses, which are, on average, approximately \$195,675. The Organization has a policy to structure its financial assets to be available as its general expenditures, liabilities and other obligations come due.

The Organization had \$1,841,650 of financial assets available within one year of the balance sheet date to meet cash needs for general expenditure consisting of cash of \$1,706,638, investments of \$90,734, receivable from the IRS of \$32,793 and accounts receivable net of allowance of \$11,485 as of December 31, 2021. None of the financial assets are subject to donor or other contractual restrictions that make them unavailable for general expenditure within one year of the balance sheet date. The accounts receivable are subject to implied time restrictions but are expected to be collected within one year. The Organization has a goal to maintain financial assets, which consist of cash, on hand to meet 60 days of normal operating expenses, which are, on average, approximately \$195,675. The Organization has a policy to structure its financial assets to be available as its general expenditures, liabilities and other obligations come due.

NOTE 8 Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) Loan

On April 23, 2020, the Organization received a first draw of \$75,800 from the Small Business Administration through the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) as a result of the CARES Act signed into law on March 27, 2020. The loan was forgiven in 2021 and recorded as revenue in the year ended December 31, 2021.

On January 27, 2021, the Organization received a second draw of \$75,800 from the Small Business Administration through the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) as a result of the CARES Act signed into law on March 27, 2020. The loan was forgiven in 2021 and is recorded as revenue for the year ended December 31, 2021.

NOTE 9 Reclassifications


Certain prior year amounts have been reclassified for consistency with the current period presentation. These reclassifications had no effect on the reported results of operations.



32. Has your organization ever been disqualified from operating within any state or region?

- Yes. Describe.
- No.

No.

ASSOCIATION OF
CLASSICAL  CHRISTIAN
SCHOOLS

**ACCS SCHOOL
ACCREDITATION**

A School-
Improvement
Program for
Schools Serving
Christ through
a Classical
Christian
Education

**ACCS ACCREDITATION HANDBOOK
SECOND EDITION • EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2020**

INITIAL APPROVAL AND REVISIONS

Initial Approval June 11, 2019/ACCS Board
Ad-Hoc Committees for Review and Action on Draft Report Nov. 1, 2019/ACCS President

 Accreditation Overview P. 8
 Accreditation Procedures P. 36
 Accreditation Timeline. P. 68

Standard B.3. Outside Influence (Was Legal Independence). January 2020/ACCS Board P. 13
Policy 5.10 Outside Influence Policy (Was Voucher Policy) January 2020/ACCS Board P. 78

Expanding ACCS Accreditation P. 4
Table: Standard Accreditation P. 5
Table: Accreditation Endorsements P. 6
Appendix A: Type of Accreditation and Accreditation Endorsements P. 52
Grievance Policy P. 49
Previsit Requirement P. 8
Previsit Rationale P. 36
Updated Standards for Virginia Schools. April 2021/VCPE Board P. 75
Multisite Endorsements September 2021/ACCS President P. 56
Multimodel Endorsements September 2021/ACCS President P. 60
Rewording of standars for music and art March 2023
Definition of Indicator June 2023
Addition to Standard B. 2. Financial Independence. October 2023
Revision to Tennessee Addendum December 2023

CONTENTS

Application for School Accreditation and Renewal.	v
Prologue.	I
A. Internal Definitions.	I
B. Explanation	2
Section 1: ACCS School Accreditation Program.	3
Goals and Means of the ACCS School Accreditation Program	3
Mission Statement	3
About ACCS Accreditation	3
Expanding ACCS Accreditation	4
Standard Accreditation	5
Accreditation Endorsements	6
Accreditation Overview	8
Candidacy Status: Process and Qualifications.	9
Section 2: Standards	11
A. Mission, Vision, and Planning..	11
B. Accountability, Independence, and Stability.	12
C. Governance and Administration.	16
D. Cultivation of Student Virtue and the School Community.	20
E. Academics	24
F. Faculty and Instructional Resources.	32
G. Student Work Samples	34
H. Standards for Renewal Accreditation	35
I. Collaborative	35
J. State Guidelines	36
K. Requests for Substitutions or Adjustments.	36
Section 3: Accreditation Procedures.	37
A. Previsit Rationale.	37
B. Self-Study Documentation.	37

C. Accreditation Committee and Site Visit	38
D. General Philosophy.	41
E. Accreditation Fees and Expenses.	41
F. Denial and Termination	41
G. Appeals Process..	41
H. Accreditation Renewal.	42
I. Accreditation Categories and Determination.	43
J. Probationary Status (Renewal Accreditation Only)	44
K. Annual Renewal for ACCS-Accredited Schools.	44
L. Substantive Change in ACCS-Accredited Schools	45
Definitions for Draft Accreditation Report.	47
Table: Schools Seeking Initial Accreditation	48
Table: Schools Seeking Renewal Accreditation: Full	49
Table: Schools Seeking Renewal Accreditation: Probation	50
L. Review and Change Procedures	51
M. ACCS Grievance Policy	52
Appendix A: Types of ACCS Accreditation and Accreditation Endorsements.	55
Appendix B: Financial Integrity Requirements.	68
Appendix C: Accreditation Time Line	71
Appendix D: Additional Standards for Regional Accrediting Organizations	73
1. Georgia School Accreditation Addendum (GAPSAC)	73
2. Tennessee School Accreditation Addendum	74
3. Texas State School Accreditation Addendum (TEPSAC).	76
4. Virginia State School Accreditation Addendum (VCPE)	78
Appendix E: ACCS Board Policies Related to ACCS Accreditation.	81
Rationale for Accrediting	81
Outside Influence Policy.	82
Appendix F: Sample Submission Package	83
Appendix G: Instructional Methods: Self-Evaluation Tool	84
Appendix H: ACCS Teacher Certification	87

The Association of Classical & Christian Schools

PO Box 9741 (317 West 6th Street, Suite #211), Moscow, Idaho 83843

Phone (208) 882-6101

APPLICATION FOR SCHOOL ACCREDITATION & RENEWAL



SCHOOL NAME _____

OFFICIAL LEGAL NAME _____ FED TAX ID (EIN) _____

STREET ADDRESS/MAILING ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

EMAIL _____ WEBSITE _____

YEAR FOUNDED _____ ENROLLMENT _____ GRADES TAUGHT _____

ACCS MEMBERSHIP SINCE (MONTH/YEAR) _____

CONTACT PERSON _____ TITLE _____

PHONE _____ EMAIL _____

For the school to be approved as a **Candidate for Accreditation** or for **Accreditation Renewal** by the director of accreditation, this application must be accompanied by the following documentation:

1. Formal approval by the school board
 - on the school's decision to pursue ACCS Accreditation;
 - that the school will have teachers become ACCS certified upon receiving accreditation;
 - showing the school supports the work and mission of ACCS.

(Include a copy of the minutes that contains the board's motion and vote.)
2. A letter signed by the school board chair, stating that
 - the school is not in violation of state law;
 - each board member attends or is a member of a Christian church;
 - each board member has read and affirms the ACCS Statement of Faith as their personal belief. (Exceptions may be considered upon an explanatory letter from the board member(s) in question, provided to the director of accreditation.)

(Also include a list of board members and the name of the church they attend.)
3. Evidence that the school conforms to the membership requirements of the ACCS. Specifically, include documentation that shows that
 - the school does not explicitly endorse unbiblical family relationships or implicitly affirm unbiblical family relationships in employment policies;

- the school does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, and national or ethnic origin with regard to *enrollment*, as well as, for *hiring*;
 - the school is committed to providing, or finding a path to, full K–12 classical Christian education for their students, now or in the future. This may include a partnership with other schools. (Note: Schools seeking a limited-grade level endorsement need not have plans to grow to grades K–12.)
 - in the grades served, the school conforms to the trivium, as well as provides, at a minimum, four years of instruction in Latin or ancient Greek for each student, and one year of formal logic and one year of rhetoric in the secondary. (Note: Schools applying for the K–8 limited grade level endorsement do not need to offer rhetoric.)
4. Documentation (e.g., marketing materials or web pages) showing that
 - the public description of the school as a classical Christian school;
 - the school’s mission statement;
 - the grades currently offered by the school (K–12 accreditation may be started with grades K–10 in place, though a graduating class is required before accreditation is awarded);
 - has been in operation for at least four full academic years with enrolled students. (Five years of operation will be required before accreditation is awarded).
 5. List of faculty, both full- and part-time, courses they teach, and degrees held by each. Include the school’s hiring policy (or written requirements) that defines the qualifications for teachers.
 6. **Initial Accreditation ONLY.** Describe the steps taken to ascertain that the school is likely to achieve ACCS Accreditation (consultant(s) engaged, school visits, etc.).
 7. **Renewals ONLY.** A letter explaining the correction of each discrepancy and any action taken on each recommendation from the last accreditation report. Provide documentation for the discrepancy corrections.
 8. A check for \$2,000 towards processing fees. The remaining \$2,000 will be due following receipt of the accreditation draft report. (The school will also be responsible for travel, lodging, and meal expenses incurred by the Accreditation Committee who undertakes the site visit.)

The signature below affirms the school’s commitment to pay all substantiated expenses directly related to the accreditation visit, upon billing from ACCS.

SIGNATURE OF HEAD OF SCHOOL

DATE

If you are unable to meet any of the items listed above, please call the ACCS office at (208) 882-6101 to discuss the item more fully.

PROLOGUE

A. INTERNAL DEFINITIONS

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

B. EXPLANATION

Each standard has sub-standards labeled with numerical extensions (A, A1, A2, etc.)

- “Principles” provide the basic logic behind the standard.
- “Indicators” illustrate the means ACCS-accredited schools typically use to demonstrate compliance with the standard. These particular ways are not required (nor are they standards). Still, if schools use other methods to comply with the standard, they must include an explanation in the self-study demonstrating how they adhere to the standard.
- “Documentation” identifies the source document required to demonstrate compliance with this standard.

Because we value the more humane, as opposed to analytical, approach to accreditation, we depend on highly qualified teams to exercise their judgment across the spectrum of classical Christian education.

SECTION 1

ACCS SCHOOL ACCREDITATION PROGRAM

GOALS AND MEANS OF THE ACCS SCHOOL ACCREDITATION PROGRAM

The goal of the ACCS school accreditation program is to provide objective and recognized standards of quality for those schools desiring to serve Christ through an explicitly classical and Protestant Christian approach to primary and secondary education.

To this end, ACCS has established criteria for accreditation that ensure that its accredited schools achieve the following:

- A well-conceived program committed to a classical approach to education in light of a Christian world-view grounded in the Old and New Testament Scriptures
- Sufficient, qualified administrative, teacher, and support staff to achieve its goals
- Sufficient instructional and other facility resources to achieve its goals

MISSION STATEMENT

For schools desiring to serve Christ through an explicitly classical Christian approach to primary and secondary education, ACCS accreditation is a school-improvement program that provides an evaluation of a school and its practices based on objective and humane standards to encourage stability, quality, and a measure of excellence.

ABOUT ACCS ACCREDITATION

ACCS accreditation is an independent, private, Christian form of accountability for schools that define themselves as “classical Christian.” Like conventional K–12 accreditation, ACCS accreditation assesses the quality of processes and practices within a school. Unlike conventional accreditation, the ACCS verifies the conformance to the standards of classical Christian pedagogy as described in the ACCS Membership Handbook.

ACCS has established and implemented accreditation standards which are consistent with the classical Christian educational philosophy and practices promoted by the Association (see the ACCS Membership Handbook). These standards are based on historical and reliable indicators of educational excellence. The accreditation process help schools improve and evaluate a minimum acceptable standard of accomplishment.

ACCS makes its accreditation standards and procedures available to interested parties. ACCS will address any misrepresentation of accredited status by any school whether a member of the Association or not.

This verification of our particular type of education means that outside observers depend on ACCS accreditation to ensure that a particular school performs substantially according to the specialized standards of a classical Christian school. **For this reason, schools may find ACCS accreditation more difficult to earn than other forms of accreditation.**

The ACCS is selective with whom it will seek agreements. In most cases, we do not directly associate with federal or state governments. We do not seek reciprocity with regional accreditors. And, we will not engage in any agreement that will encumber the educational practices of our schools. We do engage private accreditation recognition when this is beneficial and does not compromise our independence. We do not oppose or encourage “dual accreditation” when a school believes that two accreditations would be helpful. However, we do not change our standards or process (e.g., ACCS must select the visit committee members), in dual accreditation situations.

EXPANDING ACCS ACCREDITATION

For many years, the ACCS accreditation program has successfully served K–12 schools with standard calendars and schedules. ACCS now seeks to expand the types of schools eligible for ACCS accreditation while maintaining the standards of excellence that schools and parents have come to expect. The accreditation process leads to school improvement.

STANDARD ACCREDITATION		
<i>Grade Configuration</i>	K–12 (At least K–10 in place)	7–12 OR 9–12
<i>Status</i>	Available	Developmental
<i>Schedule and Calendar</i>	Traditional calendar & schedule	Traditional calendar & schedule
<i>Next Step</i>	Submit application for school accreditation (see p. iii).	Send letter explaining: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How students receive a classical, Christian education in grades K–6. Schools with grades 9 to 12 should also explain how students are taught logic and Latin (or Greek). 2. How K-6 education is being provided in the community. 3. How students' knowledge is assessed during the admissions process.
<i>Website Listing</i>	ACCS-accredited OR ACCS-accredited with distinction	ACCS-accredited OR ACCS-accredited with distinction
<i>Diplomas</i>	Schools may issue diplomas. May use this language: “Diploma authorized by the Association of Classical & Christian Schools.”	Schools may issue diplomas. May use this language: “Diploma authorized by the Association of Classical & Christian Schools.”
<i>Miscellaneous</i>	Multisite schools must meet additional standards (developmental).	

Developmental: Visit committees will use a draft set of revised standards during their site visit. Recommendations for changes to the draft standards, from the school and visit committee, will be provided to an ad-hoc committee following the site visit. Initial accreditation for these endorsements may involve one or two visits, depending on the school’s readiness.

ACCREDITATION ENDORSEMENTS

Our endorsement program allows for a variety of types of accreditation available through the ACCS.
 Schools that want to combine endorsements must request specific approval.

<i>Type</i>	Collaborative Endorsement	Limited Grade Level Endorsement	Limited Student Service Endorsement	Online School Endorsement
<i>Grade Configuration</i>	Varies K–12 for diploma authorization (At least K–10 in place)	K–6 or K–8	Varies	
<i>Status</i>	Available	Developmental	Developmental	Requires ACCS Board approval
<i>Schedule and Calendar</i>	Weekly schedule includes school days and home days. (Traditional calendar)	Traditional calendar and schedule	Traditional calendar and schedule	Traditional calendar and schedule
<i>Next Step</i>	Submit application for school accreditation (see p. iii).	Send a letter explaining how students receive a classical, Christian education in other schools in the local area.	Send a letter describing the students served at the school and an explanation of modifications to traditional schooling made to accommodate such students.	Send a letter describing the scope of online instruction, grades and subjects; approximate size of enrollment; and the location of the main office.
<i>Website Listing</i>	ACCS-accredited with collaborative endorsement	ACCS-accredited with a limited level endorsement	ACCS-accredited with a limited student service endorsement	

<i>Diploma</i>	Schools may issue diplomas. May use this language: “Diploma authorized by the Association of Classical & Christian Schools.”	Schools may not offer diplomas or certificates, ACCS endorsed or otherwise.	Diplomas issued depend upon grade configuration.	Diplomas may be awarded IF the school ensures that graduation requirements are met from the state students reside in. This is currently required for students from Georgia, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia.
<i>Miscellaneous</i>	Collaborative schools must meet additional standards.	Schools that grow to a K–12 structure MUST reapply for K–12 accreditation.	This category does not apply to schools with selective application policies that are within the spectrum of "normal."	

Developmental: Visit committees will use a draft set of revised standards during their site visit. Recommendations for changes to the draft standards, from the school and visit committee, will be provided to an ad-hoc committee following the site visit. Initial accreditation for these endorsements may involve one or two visits, depending on the school’s readiness.

ACCREDITATION OVERVIEW

- A. **Timeline.** Generally, schools take between one and two years to complete the accreditation process. (A timeline is included in this handbook.)
- B. **Application.** The director of accreditation will review the application and accompanying documentation for completeness. Upon completion of a successful review, the school will be designated as a Candidate for Accreditation, which is a pre-accredited designation assigned to those schools which meet the initial Conditions of Eligibility and have been accepted for ongoing review toward ACCS school accreditation. Candidates still need to complete a pre-visit, a self-study, a site visit, and be approved by the ad-hoc committee for the school to receive accredited status. Candidate schools are encouraged to have administrators visit other ACCS-accredited schools during the school year.
- C. **Previsit.** All schools seeking ACCS initial accreditation must have an on-site previsit with the director of accreditation or a person selected by the director of accreditation. This is to ensure a person who has direct experience with the ACCS-accreditation process and standards. The sooner this is done after candidacy status is approved, the more time the school will have to address issues prior to the site visit. The visit may be scheduled anytime once the school is recognized as a candidate.
- D. **Self-Study.** Each candidate school is required to perform a self-study prior to the on-site visit. This study will include input from all members of the school administration and staff. During the self-study, schools will study all standards and requirements, conduct self-evaluations, train personnel, and make necessary changes and adjustments seeking to meet all of the ACCS Conditions of Eligibility and Criteria for Accreditation. This is the second part of a process where schools demonstrate compliance with ACCS accreditation requirements.
- E. **Site Visit.** Although much may be gleaned about a school from the self-evaluation documentation package, an on-site visit is required to affirm all aspects of the school's operation, including, but not limited to, classroom pedagogy, student participation and development, staff relations, parent-teacher relations, financial policies and procedures, board oversight, and community support. ACCS will appoint an accreditation committee to make the visit.
- F. **Report.** The site visit results in a formal, written report to the director of accreditation. Accreditation reports have three types of determinations that are always in reference to a specific standard.
 - 1. **Commendation:** The school's practice exceeds the standard in such a way that it deserves commendation.
 - 2. **Recommendation:** The school's practice could be improved by taking the recommended action, but the school meets the minimum requirements for that standard.
 - 3. **Discrepancy:** The school falls short of one of the standards in its practices. Discrepancies may be major or minor in nature, as designated on the report.
- D. **Accredited Status Determination.** The director of accreditation will forward the recommendation (as to whether the school has met all ACCS accreditation requirements), to the president and the visit committee

chair (or senior member). Recommendations range from full accredited status, to provisional or probationary accreditation, to failed accreditation (and continued candidacy status). An ad-hoc committee consisting of the visit committee chairman, the director of accreditation, and the president is authorized to make a final determination as to whether or not a school receives accreditation. Should the decision be appealed by the school in question, the appeal will go to the ACCS Board of Directors.

Once the ad-hoc committee has taken action to accept the proposed accredited status, the school is accredited (or if the school fails an initial accreditation, the school may remain a candidate for accreditation).

1. Schools undergoing accreditation for the first time may fail based upon the number and nature of discrepancies in the visiting team's report.
 2. Schools undergoing accreditation for the first time may be granted "Provisional Accreditation" as long as discrepancies remain.
 3. Schools that are undergoing a renewal may be granted "Probationary Accreditation" if discrepancies remain.
 4. Schools that are undergoing a renewal may fail based on the number and nature of discrepancies.
 5. Schools with no remaining discrepancies will be classified as "Accredited."
- F. Re-evaluation. All schools accredited by ACCS must undergo regular accreditation renewals in order to retain their accredited status. Schools that were successfully accredited but fall short of the requirements on subsequent renewal visits may be initially placed in a Probationary Status for a fixed amount of time to allow them to correct discrepancies.
- G. Annual Updates. ACCS requires annual feedback from each accredited school (as part of the membership renewal process) to ensure schools remain in compliance with the ACCS accreditation standards. Notifications of certain changes on this annual form may provoke an accreditation review. As part of this review, schools may be required to submit additional documentation.

CANDIDACY STATUS: PROCESS AND QUALIFICATIONS

- A. To be recognized as a candidate for accreditation, the applicant-school must submit a complete application for accreditation (or accreditation renewal) with all specified documentation.
- Note on board member requirements: The school must be governed by a board of at least three members (a husband and a wife serving on the board counting as one member), who are members of a Christian church and whose church and personal beliefs align with the ACCS Statement of Faith. (Each board member must affirm their personal agreement with the ACCS Statement of Faith. If individual board members cannot affirm the statement of faith as their personal belief, or if they do not attend or are not members of a Christian church, they must provide a written statement explaining the reasons for their position. These statements will be reviewed by the ACCS President.)

- B. The director of accreditation will review the application and accompanying documentation for completeness. This may involve clarifications or requests for additional information.
- C. Upon completion of a successful review of the application by the director of accreditation, the school will be designated as a Candidate for Accreditation, which is a pre-accredited designation assigned to those schools which meet the initial Conditions of Eligibility (see application) and have been accepted for ongoing review toward ACCS school accreditation.
- D. Candidates may then proceed to schedule a previsit, complete a self-study, host a site visit, and demonstrate compliance and excellence according to the standards listed below. Candidates have one year from notification of their candidacy status (for initial or renewal accreditation) to submit their self-study.

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.
- b. 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.
- c. 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.
- b. 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.
- c. 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

A.3. 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.
- b. Indicators:
 - i. Periodic worldview interviews with students
- c. Documentation will include:
 - i. Philosophy of education
 - ii. Description of a graduate
 - iii. School profile (showing matriculations)
 - iv. Results from parent survey)
 - v. Do not include achievement test scores or high-school graduation requirements for this standard.

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.

- b. Indicators:
 - i. Accredited schools typically receive at least 80% of their income from student tuition.
- c. 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.

- b. 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.

- c. 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 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 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 tuition programs may 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. A school that compromised on Biblical truth (e.g., marriage and gender issues) to continue receiving government funds would be in danger of losing ACCS-accredited status.
 - b. 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:
 - (a) Schools limit receipt of these funds to a set percentage of budgeted revenue.
 - (b) Schools allocate some funds to a reserve fund.
 - (c) Schools limit the available funds 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 continued participation in these programs threatens the school's mission. The reserve fund amount is sufficient to keep the school operating for a time absent state funds.
 - c. Documentation should include:
 - i. Board-approved policy or guidelines that explain the board's rationale for the school's participation in ESA programs. Board policy must acknowledge a commitment to stop accepting funds, even if that means closing the school rather than operating in a way that conflicts with Scripture, particularly regarding marriage and gender issues.
 - ii. Financial plans or documents showing the board's mitigation plans against the potential loss of funding or if the school must cease receipt of these funds to protect the school's mission.
 - iii. Budget that shows the total amount of ESA revenue relative to total budgeted revenue.
 - iv. Examples of how the school communicates to parents about participation in these funding programs.
 - v. 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.)
- 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.
- b. 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.
- c. 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.
- b. 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.
- c. 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.

- b. 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.
- c. 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.
- b. 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%.
- c. 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.

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

- b. 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.
- c. 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.4. 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.
- b. 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.

- c. 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.5. 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.
- b. 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.
- c. 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.6. 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.
- b. 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.
- c. Documentation:
 - i. Policies regarding the qualifications, election, and training of board members will be included.

C.7. Compliance with the Law: 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.
- b. Indicators:
 - i. How does the school comply with the state’s compulsory education law (for example, number of school days)?
- c. 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).

- b. 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.
- c. 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.
- b. 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.
- c. 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.
- b. 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.
- c. 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.
- b. 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.
- c. 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.
- b. 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.
- c. 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.
- b. 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.
- c. 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.
- b. 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.
- c. 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. Academics. 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. Sayers and Gregory: Instructional and teaching methods should reflect an understanding, application, and value for those ideas described by Dorothy Sayers in "The Lost Tools of Learning" and by John Milton Gregory in *The Seven Laws of Teaching*.

- a. Principle: The recovery of classical Christian education is based on the Trivium, the first three of the seven liberal arts. Dorothy Sayers drew important observations from the Trivium as she described medieval education. She also correlates the Trivium to the developmental stages of a child: Poll-parrot (grammar stage), Pert (logic stage), and Poetic (rhetoric stage).
 - i. From the earliest days of the movement, *The Seven Laws of Teaching* were helpful in describing a core set of timeless and fundamental pedagogical practices. The ACCS is committed to the "Seven Laws of Teaching" as described by John Milton Gregory.
- b. Indicators:
 - i. There should be regular reviews of the Seven Laws. Adherence to the laws will go a long way to ensuring that the school is offering high-quality instruction.
 - ii. Grammatical methods should be clearly applied at all levels of the grammar stage, dialectic techniques should be used throughout that level, and rhetoric practically observed in the upper grades.
 - iii. Sayers' various methods of instruction associated with each aspect of the Trivium should be evident at the appropriate stages of development/student instruction.
 - iv. Gregory's seven laws should be evident throughout all stages of the Trivium in each classroom, as well as in teacher evaluations and teacher training sessions.

- v. The tools of learning are integrated with classroom observation forms or teacher evaluation forms. Include those forms here.
 - c. Documents:
 - i. This will be observed during classroom instruction as part of the on-site visit.
 - ii. Training plans and records of past training should include material consistent with Sayers and Gregory.
- 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.
 - b. Indicators:
 - i. A rhetorical thesis presentation required for every graduate (not specifically a senior thesis).
 - c. Documentation will show:
 - i. Published high-school graduation requirements
 - ii. 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.
 - b. 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.
- c. 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).
- b. 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
- c. 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.

b. Indicators:

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

c. 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.

b. 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).

c. 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.

b. 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.)
- c. 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.
- b. 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).
- c. 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.
- b. 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.
- c. 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.
- b. 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.
- c. 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.
- b. 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.
- c. 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.
- b. Indicators:
 - i. Sound biblical and theological components are regular components of discussions in all subjects.
- c. 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.
- b. 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.

b. 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.

b. 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.

c. 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?
- iv.

F. Faculty and Instructional Resources. The school must have sufficient faculty, instructional, and facility resources to achieve its mission.

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.
- b. 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.
- c. 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.
- b. Indicators:
 - i. Overall student/teacher ratios for the school, maximum class size, and other limits on class size are published and followed.
- c. 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.
- b. 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.
- c. 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.

- b. 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.
- c. 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. 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.
- b. Indicators:
 - i. Completed faculty evaluations include items for teachers to improve on. Evaluations don't solely consist of praise and positive affirmations.
- c. 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.
- b. 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.
- b. Indicators:
 - i. The teachers are aware of their certification level and how it impacts them.
- c. 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.
- b. 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. Tennessee School Accreditation
3. Texas State School Accreditation
4. 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."

SECTION

ACCREDITATION PROCEDURES

3

This section describes the full procedure through which a school becomes accredited once the school has applied for accreditation and has achieved candidacy status.

A. Previsit Rationale

1. ACCS accredits schools that provide a specific form of education. Classical Christian education is not a flavor of education, it's a different philosophy of education. Because the form differs from other methodologies, the process of accreditation is necessarily structured differently.
2. A school may have accreditation from another association, but that doesn't assure the school of being prepared for ACCS accreditation. The ACCS accreditation process puts a premium on assessing the student experience, especially, but not exclusively, in the classroom.
3. As classical Christian education has become more popular, and as ACCS works to accredit a wider variety of school configurations, we have concluded that we need to do more to assist schools seeking initial accreditation to be prepared for a successful site visit.
4. In today's education marketplace, there are a number of voices claiming to define classical Christian education. For schools to successfully achieve ACCS accreditation, school leaders need to focus on explanations and standards identified and defined by ACCS.
5. All schools seeking ACCS initial accreditation must have an on-site pre-visit with the director of accreditation or a person selected by the director of accreditation. This is to ensure a person who has direct experience with the ACCS-accreditation process and standards. The sooner this is done after candidacy status is approved, the more time the school will have to address issues prior to the site visit.
6. This visit and subsequent report will not guarantee that a school will be recommended for initial accreditation, but it will give schools the opportunity to better understand what is expected and to have the opportunity to address and improve practices at the school to increase the likelihood of being recommended for initial accreditation.

B. Self-Study Documentation. The school applying for accreditation must submit a self-study that substantiates how the school meets or exceeds each of the **Criteria for Accreditation**. Schools combine an electronic version of the Criteria for Accreditation, with documents ("show") **and** brief explanations ("tell") to create the documentation package. This documentation package must be postmarked **no later than one year** from the date of the school's notification of having been approved as a Candidate for Accreditation, and sent to the ACCS Director of Accreditation for initial review and feedback. Failure to do so will likely result in the termination of the school's approval as a Candidate for Accreditation. This will require that the school restart the process and forfeit any fees already paid. Extensions may be granted in rare, special situations.

1. Two reviews of the self-study are commonly done. During the first review, the director of accreditation will review the self-study and send the review back to the school. The review will identify any work that needs to be completed and help the school to correct omissions. Typically, potential discrepancies are identified in this review. (Note: not all discrepancies included in the accreditation report are identified during the self-study review.) Suggestions for making the self-study easier to review by the visit committee are also included. Schools send the revised self-study back to the director of accreditation. The second review by the director of accreditation will focus primarily on items noted in the first review. Upon receiving a response from the second review, the director of accreditation will, at his discretion, advance to the next step in the process.
2. In the event that the school believes an adjustment or exception is needed to one of the standards based upon the self-study evaluation, the school's designated representative may send a letter of appeal to the director of accreditation. The director may choose to accommodate the school's request, or he may choose to escalate the matter to the ACCS President, who may approve the request, or forward the request to the ACCS Board of Directors. The board would consider the appeal at the next quarterly meeting. A decision on the matter will be passed through the president of the ACCS to the director of accreditation. The purpose of this process is to prevent such appeals from a first hearing after the expense of the visit.
3. Once any deficiencies noted in the director of accreditation's review have been addressed, the school will be directed to send a copy of the documentation package to each member of an accreditation committee appointed by the director of accreditation. The following time-line and guidance applies:
 - a. The director of accreditation will request dates for the visit at least three to four months out to allow time for identifying the accreditation committee and time for them to review the school's documentation package.
 - b. Schools must provide all required/requested documentation directly to the visiting committee members at least three months prior to a desired visit. The director of accreditation will also provide any comments from his review to the committee.
 - c. The committee shall be given one month to read through all material prior to any flights being arranged. This will allow time for the committee to evaluate the suitability of a visit to the school based on the documentation review.
 - d. After reviewing the materials, the visit committee chair will inform the director of accreditation as to whether or not the committee believes a visit is warranted. If not, then the director of accreditation will notify the school with the stated reasons, and allow the school up to six months to address the indicated problems. If a school fails to address the problems, by default, the school must begin the process anew.
4. Once the committee agrees that the school merits a visit, the director of accreditation will notify the school to make local arrangements for the visit and have the committee members make their travel arrangements.

C. Accreditation Committee and Site Visit.

1. On-site visits by an accreditation committee are required for accreditation.
2. An accreditation committee will be appointed by the director of accreditation. The committee will be composed of three or four people from among the ACCS Board of Directors (current or former, including former ACCS board members who have had experience on an ACCS Accreditation Committee), the director of accreditation, the headmaster (or equivalent) or administrator of an ACCS-accredited school, or administrators who have served at an ACCS-accredited school in the past five years. Preference will be given to committee members of equivalent or greater enrollment than the school being evaluated. Committee members may not be drawn from personnel attached to the school undergoing the accreditation, nor from anyone who served the school as a pre-accreditation consultant.
3. All accreditation committee members are required to have read the most current version of the ACCS Accreditation Handbook which will be forwarded to them at least two months prior to the scheduled school visit.
4. The accreditation committee chair will be assigned the responsibility of overseeing the inexperienced committee members by helping instruct them in what to look for.
5. The accreditation committee is authorized to request additional information from the applying school if that information is essential to the accreditation process. No individual accreditation committee member is authorized to request information on his own; only the accreditation committee may request such information through the committee chair. The committee chair is appointed by the director of accreditation and will typically be the person on the committee with the most experience with ACCS accreditations.
6. The accreditation committee may call on the expertise of qualified persons who are not assigned to the committee to assist them on specific questions relating to the school accreditation if needed. Such persons will be listed in the report and the specific area(s) in which they provided assistance.
7. Accreditation committee members may not contact a school they visited for purposes of paid consultant work for one year following the date of the site visit.
8. Upon completion of the committee's visit:
 - a. Before leaving the school, the accreditation chair (and if possible all committee members) will meet with the head of school to verbally communicate general impressions that will be included in the written report that should be received within four weeks following the visit.
 - b. Draft written report. The accreditation committee will complete a written report within three weeks and send it to the director of accreditation for review. Any comments, either commendations or discrepancies, must be documented. The committee must substantiate, by example or illustration, all comments included in the report.

- i. The director of accreditation will review the written report for compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation.
- ii. Within one month of the site visit, the director of accreditation will send the written report to the school. The school may submit a written response within 30 days that will be attached to the report.
- c. The ACCS Director of Accreditation will make the recommendation to the ACCS President and the visit committee chairman (or senior member). These three will serve as an ad-hoc committee. The ad hoc committee will make a determination on the recommendation. The following guidelines will govern the process of accreditation (or accreditation renewal) upon completion of the accreditation (or accreditation renewal) visit.
- d. The director of accreditation will report the committee's determination to the school along with any germane comments.

D. General Philosophy.

1. Notwithstanding all the previously listed items that must be complied with, it is important to realize that not all circumstances and situations can be adequately addressed in specifics in this accreditation policy. Scripture doesn't teach, and life is not best lived, by a simple set of check-boxes. Wisdom is always the God-given key.
2. It has always been the intent of ACCS to accredit schools in the most meaningful way.
3. It is for this reason that schools seeking accreditation must realize and permit the ACCS accreditors to delve into any matters that seem relevant to them that might not have been specifically listed above. Furthermore, it must be understood that a school seeking accreditation with ACCS may be turned down even though it has met all the criteria at a "technical" level. The failure would be because they did not meet the essence of what is intended by the specific written guidelines. Such a decision would automatically be appealed to the entire ACCS Accreditation Committee, by the director of accreditation, the president, and the affected school.

E. Accreditation Fees and Expenses. The fee for the initial accreditation is \$4,000, \$2,000 of which is required with submission of the application for accreditation, and is non-refundable. The second half (\$2,000) is due on completion of the accreditation. The fee for school accreditation is separate from the expenses for travel, room, and board for the previsit and the accreditation committee on-site visit. Note: There is an additional fee (\$2,000) for multi-site visits requiring visits longer than normal.

F. Denial and Termination. If the school is found to no longer be in compliance with a qualification or criteria required for candidacy or accredited status, ACCS may find it necessary to terminate a school's recognition as "ACCS accredited." If such action is under consideration, the director of accreditation will notify the head of school that a recommendation for termination has been made to the ACCS President. The school will have the opportunity to provide documentation relative to the matter. The president will make his recommendation to the ACCS Board of Directors, who will vote on the recommendation. Once a decision to terminate a school's accredited status is made, the school must no longer promote itself as ACCS accredited.

G. 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 committee authorized to hear the schools appeal).
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 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 from the ACCS director of accreditation, to the ACCS President and to the ACCS board.

4. The ACCS Director of Accreditation will review and forward the appeal and supporting materials to the ACCS President, who will forward them to the board of directors, with his recommendation.
5. The ACCS Board of Directors shall review the appeal and supporting documentation and make a determination on the appeal at their next quarterly meeting.
6. 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 (as required) to the applicable accreditation oversight organization(s) of which ACCS is a member along with a copy of the appeal and the school's supporting documentation.
7. Any expenses that may arise as a result of the appeal will be borne by the appealing school.
8. Appeals will not be permitted to schools that fail to undergo a renewal visit at the end of their probation period.

H. Accreditation Renewal. All of the requirements in Sections 1 and 2 apply for accreditation renewal except as modified by the amplifying guidelines below:

1. Reapplication. Schools holding accredited status **must** re-apply within two years following their initial accreditation to maintain this status. Schools may receive renewal accreditation for a period of two or five years, based on the evaluation of the school by the assigned committee and the decision of the ACCS Board of Directors. At the end of this time, they must re-apply for renewal accreditation again in order to maintain their accredited status. (See section Section H.3, Probationary Status below for information on probation.)
2. Committee size. On-site visits for accreditation renewal following a successful accreditation will consist of at least three members for small schools (one section at each grade level) and more for large schools (more than one section at some grade levels). For accreditation renewal visits, it is preferable, if possible, to select committee members who have participated in the initial on-site visit.
3. Documentation. At least six months prior to an accreditation renewal on-site visit, an accredited school must submit an application for school accreditation renewal. Self-study documentation, in the same format as its original self-study, will be required shortly thereafter, following the guidelines in Appendix F for the Standards (Section 2).
4. Fees. For accreditation renewals, the fee is \$4,000, half (\$2,000) to be paid with the renewal application, and the remainder to be paid following the visit. Once paid, fees are **non-refundable**. The fee for school accreditation renewal is separate from the expenses for transportation, room and board, for the accreditation committee on-site visit, which are to be borne by the applying school.
5. Process. All of the other timelines and procedures listed above in Section 3 (*Accreditation Procedures*) relating to the initial accreditation process will also apply to accreditation renewal.
6. Extensions/probation. If an accredited school is unable to undergo a scheduled renewal visit within a reasonable time frame (no more than a couple of months of its scheduled due date) because of issues at

the school, it must notify ACCS in writing and the school will be placed on probation. Possible reasons that might cause an accredited school to delay its accreditation and therefore be placed on probation may include, but are not limited to, the recent loss of the school's head administrator, or the un-replaced loss of an instructor (e.g., the school's Latin teacher). The inability of ACCS to provide a timely visit for any reason will not be held against the school.

7. **Time Limit.** Schools have one additional year to have an on-site accreditation visit. If at the end of the probation period, the school does not undergo an on-site accreditation visit, its accredited status will be dropped (the school's status will be "unaccredited") with no appeal permitted. If the school on probation does have the on-site visit as scheduled at the end of its probationary period, it may have access to an appeal (see Section 3, F. for information on appeals). Subsequent application for accreditation (once the school returns to "unaccredited" status, either following the failure of the school to undergo an on-site visit or "unaccredited" status assigned by the ACCS process) will be considered an initial event. The next step for the school is re-application. At this time, the school's application will start over, returning to an initial accreditation, except that the school's application must be accompanied with a letter documenting the correction of all outstanding discrepancies from the last conducted on-site visit.
8. **Correction of Discrepancies.** Schools placed on Probation Status as a result of an on-site renewal visit, but with discrepancies that may be corrected without a subsequent on-site visit (e.g., failure of an administrative requirement), may have their status upgraded to "accredited" by the ACCS Director of Accreditation provided the school adequately documents in writing that the discrepancies have been corrected. This upgrading will only be permitted if it is assigned as a part of the school's most recent accreditation renewal report approved by the ACCS Board of Directors. Such upgrades are permissible at any time within the two-year window. The correction of discrepancies that require an on-site visit may be done without a full self-study, only requiring documents directly relevant to the discrepancy. Accreditation committees of two are appropriate for such visits.
9. **Accreditation Renewal Status.** As with accreditation, the ACCS Board will ultimately determine the accreditation renewal status of a school based on the recommendation of the ACCS Accreditation Committee. The accreditation committee will consider the report from the assigned accreditation renewal visit committee and any documentation submitted by the school in response to the committee's report.

I. Accreditation Categories and Determination.

After a school has gone through the accreditation visit, it will be assigned an accreditation status. The three categories of accredited status are listed and explained below.

1. **Full Accredited Status** is granted to those schools which meet both the initial conditions for eligibility and the criteria for accreditation as determined by the ACCS Board of Directors.
2. **Provisionally Accredited Status (Initial Accreditation Only)** is an accredited status granted to those schools that have completed their initial self-study and on-site visit but have yet to graduate their first senior class or have discrepancies that must be corrected before they can be granted Accredited Status.

Schools assigned Provisionally Accredited Status may be granted up to two years (depending upon the nature and difficulty of the discrepancy) to correct all reported discrepancies before their next on-site visit.

J. Probationary Status. (Renewal Accreditation only) Schools that had been successfully accredited in the past, but on a subsequent accreditation renewal have failed to meet the ACCS accreditation standards, will be placed on probationary status for no more than two years and be provided a specific list of discrepancies. Sometimes the school may be required to correct discrepancies within six months or a year. If after the two-year probationary period the school still fails to meet each of the ACCS accreditation guidelines, the school may have its accreditation status removed by ACCS. Schools that have made clear progress toward correcting all discrepancies may be continued on probation for another two years. Schools that have accreditation removed may reapply for accreditation when they can substantially document that they have corrected all of the outstanding discrepancies. The subsequent accreditation process will be considered as though it was a first-time accreditation which would include all fees, expenses, and documentation. The above notwithstanding, a school placed on Probationary Status may appeal to the ACCS Director of Accreditation at any time with proof that the issues which resulted in Probationary Status have been corrected.

K. Annual Review for ACCS-Accredited Schools Each ACCS-accredited school must answer these questions on an annual basis during membership renewal:

Review of Accreditation Standards: Has the school designated a member of the school board, staff, or faculty to review the ACCS accreditation standards (Section 2, Standards) within the past year and can that person affirm that the school still conforms to the minimal requirements for ACCS accreditation?

Changes to Key Documents:

1. Bylaw Review: Has the school made significant changes to its bylaws since the last accreditation visit? If so, please describe those changes.
2. Policy Manual Review: Has the school made significant changes to its policy manual since the last visit? If so, please describe those changes.
3. Curriculum Guide Review: Has the school made significant changes to its curriculum guide(s) since the last visit? If so, please describe those changes.
4. Teacher Certification: As an ACCS-accredited school, you are required to participate in an ACCS teacher certification program. Is the school actively pursuing teacher certification for all full-time (and affected part-time) teachers?

Other Potential Changes: Have any of the following occurred during the covered time period?

5. Has there been a change in the head of school?
6. Has the school added a grade level to an existing division (i.e., adding grade 8 when grades K–7 are already accredited)?

7. Has the school added online, credit recovery courses?
8. Any additional information related to the answers above:

Reminder–Substantive Change: Under certain conditions, ACCS-accredited schools are required to send a report within 60 days of any of the following changes in the school. Failure to notify ACCS as required of a substantive change is grounds for the association to issue a letter asking the school to show cause as to why the school’s status should not be withheld, with a time stated, to a candidate or accredited school. Please see the “Substantive Change” section in the Accreditation Handbook for more information.

L. Substantive Change in ACCS-Accredited Schools

Under certain conditions, ACCS-accredited schools are required to send a report within 60 days of any of the following changes in the school. Failure to notify ACCS as required of a substantive change is grounds for the association to issue a letter asking the school to show cause as to why the school’s status should not be withheld, with a time stated, to a candidate or accredited school.

If a substantive change occurs in an accredited school, the continuation of the school's accredited status, or the inclusion of the substantive change in the institution’s previous grant of accreditation, shall require notice to the Director of Accreditation regarding the proposed change and may require, at the discretion of the ACCS:

Review of the notice and supporting documents by the Director of Accreditation. This may require:

- A request for additional documentation, at the discretion of the Director of Accreditation. For example, financial issues could require the completion of a financial integrity report.
- A one- or two-day visit by a one- or two-member team at the discretion of the Director of Accreditation.
- Recommendation from the Director of Accreditation to the president.
- Subsequent approval by the president.

These are the conditions that constitute a “substantive change” in an accredited school as well as the processes for communicating a substantive change to the director of accreditation.

The following items require the school to inform the director of accreditation:

1. Change in the school’s legal name or EIN (Employer Identification Number).
2. Change in ownership or control
3. Change in legal status (e.g., from nonprofit to for-profit, bankruptcy, church-sponsored to independent, etc.) or form of control of the institution
4. New board members added since the last accreditation (or accreditation renewal) must acknowledge agreement with the ACCS statement of faith.
5. Change in the school's established mission

6. A material change in the school's financial position that threatens the school's ability to remain a going concern or otherwise threatens the school's ability to effectively support its operations
7. Change of location or adding a location that is under the accreditation status
8. The merger of two schools, whether only one or both are currently accredited
9. Change in grade level configuration. Including the addition of a new school division that is not yet accredited (e.g., high school) or a grade that opens up a new division (e.g. grade 9)
10. Addition of courses or programs that represent a significant departure, in terms of either the content or method of delivery. This includes a change in the type of school or in the curricular identity of the school (e.g., International Baccalaureate, Classical, ACE, etc.) or a change or significant addition(s) to program delivery (e.g., percentage of online courses)
11. Addition of degree or diploma-granting program
12. Notification of adverse action taken or threatened by a state or other accrediting agency
13. Any change that impacts the meeting of a condition of eligibility, an accreditation standard, or a critical indicator or other change representing a significant departure in circumstances from those that were present at the time of the most recent ACCS accreditation renewal visit.

Substantive change reports should include a brief narrative about the nature of the change, the decision-making process leading to the change, including reference to the strategic plan, any impact on the standards or critical indicators, and the anticipated benefits of the change.

Following a document review and/or site visit, the director of accreditation will make a recommendation to the president. Recommendations will state:

1. Whether the changes are approved or not approved.
2. Whether the school will maintain its regular timeline for accreditation renewal
3. Whether components of accreditation renewal must be received earlier, or if the entire renewal schedule must be changed.

The school will be notified of the specific grounds for any association's adverse action, the specific standard(s) for which there has not been compliance, the nature of the action, and the right of the school to appeal if permitted by, and in accordance with, the appeal procedures in the Accreditation Handbook.

DEFINITIONS FOR ACCREDITATION REPORTS

1. **Major Discrepancy.** A major discrepancy is defined as the failure of a school to meet one of the criteria listed in Section E, Criteria for Accreditation. These discrepancies often *seriously* impair the quality of education.
2. **Minor Discrepancy.** A minor discrepancy is defined as the school not adequately meeting one of the criteria listed in Section E, Criteria for Accreditation. Should the Accreditation Visit Committee or the ACCS Accreditation Committee determine that the accumulation of minor discrepancies is so numerous that their aggregate seriously impairs the quality of education, the sum total may be designated as a major discrepancy.
3. **Recommendations.** These are suggested changes or improvements that all committee members agree on and that are based on experience and directly related to the ACCS Criteria for Accreditation. Individual committee members may make additional suggestions, but they will not be included as a part of the accreditation report.

Note: When we last revised these tables, we tried to give the visit committees freedom to make the right recommendation for the school. These tables serve as a helpful guide to the committees but not in a formulaic sense, i.e.: if there are "x" number of discrepancies, then this must be the recommendation.

SCHOOLS SEEKING INITIAL ACCREDITATION		
FIRST ACCREDITATION: SCHOOL IS A CANDIDATE FOR ACCREDITATION		
FINDINGS	DEFINITION	CONSEQUENCE
Major Discrepancy	The failure of a school to meet one of the standards. <i>Seriously</i> impairs the quality of education.	Provisional Accreditation OR Failure If provisional, the school would have no more than two years to correct these discrepancies. Provisional accreditation would be unusual. If failed, candidacy for accreditation status will be retained. This status will last for up to two years to correct all discrepancies and host another site visit.
Minor Discrepancy	The failure of a school to meet one of the standards. <i>Mildly</i> impairs the quality of education.	Provisional Accreditation OR Failure If provisional, the school would have no more than two years to correct these discrepancies. Multiple minor discrepancies equate to a major discrepancy.
No Discrepancies	The school demonstrates compliance with all standards.	Provisional. Status for two years at which time a renewal visit is required of all initially accredited schools
Recommendations	Offered to help the school improve.	No action is mandated, a written comment is required for each recommendation prior to the next accreditation visit.
OPTIONS FOR THE VISIT COMMITTEE		
SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION FOR DRAFT ACCREDITATION REPORT		
Two-year, provisional status (This is the most that a school may receive for initial accredited status.)		Expected recommendation if there are no discrepancies OR if there are only minor discrepancies. In rare cases, could be recommended even if there is a discrepancy. This would also be the recommendation if at a K–10 school that still had to graduate its first senior class.
Failed.		Typical recommendation this if there are major discrepancies, or if there are multiple minor discrepancies. The school would remain a candidate for accreditation The school would have to write a new self study and conduct a second on site visit within two years.

SCHOOLS SEEKING RENEWAL ACCREDITATION		
FIRST RENEWAL ACCREDITATION: (SCHOOL HAS PROVISIONAL ACCREDITATION) OR SUBSEQUENT RENEWAL ACCREDITATION: (SCHOOL HAS FULL ACCREDITATION)		
FINDINGS	DEFINITION	CONSEQUENCE
Major Discrepancy	The failure of a school to meet one of the standards. <i>Seriously</i> impairs the quality of education.	Schools must correct all identified discrepancies within a specified time frame; six months to two years. The nature of the discrepancies determines if a site visit is needed to verify the correction of the discrepancies or if the correction may be verified through documentation.
Minor Discrepancy	The failure of a school to meet one of the standards. <i>Mildly</i> impairs the quality of education.	Must correct all identified discrepancies within specified time frame; maximum of two years though may be shorter. The nature of the discrepancies determines if a site visit is needed to see the correction of the discrepancies. Multiple minor discrepancies equate to a major discrepancy.
No Discrepancies	The school demonstrates compliance with all standards.	The school would have five years before the next visit.
Recommendations	Offered to help the school improve.	No action is mandated, a written comment is required for each recommendation prior to the next accreditation visit.
SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION FOR DRAFT ACCREDITATION REPORT OPTIONS FOR THE VISIT COMMITTEE		
Five-year, full accredited status		Committee may only recommend this is there are no discrepancies in the draft accreditation report
Probationary Accredited Status		The school would have two years to correct all discrepancies in the report. If the discrepancies are corrected within two year, the status would be converted to full accredited status for five years.
Loss of Accredited Status (Not an option) This table is for schools currently under full accredited status.		In the worst case, a school would move to probationary status. The next required visit would typically be in two years. However, the committee could recommend a shorter time.

SCHOOLS SEEKING RENEWAL ACCREDITATION		
SUBSEQUENT RENEWAL ACCREDITATION: SCHOOL HAS PROBATION ACCREDITATION		
FINDINGS	DEFINITION	CONSEQUENCE
Major Discrepancy	The failure of a school to meet one of the standards. <i>Seriously</i> impairs the quality of education.	<p>Probation or Loss of Accreditation.</p> <p>Schools must correct all identified discrepancies within a specified time frame; six months to two years.</p> <p>The nature of the discrepancies determines if a site visit is needed to verify the correction of the discrepancies or if the correction may be verified through documentation.</p>
Minor Discrepancies	The failure of a school to meet one of the standards. <i>Mildly</i> impairs the quality of education.	<p>Continued probationary status. Schools must correct all identified discrepancies within a specified time frame; six months to two years.</p> <p>Multiple minor discrepancies equate to a major discrepancy.</p>
No Discrepancies	The school demonstrates compliance with all standards.	May be assigned up to five years before the next visit.
Recommendations	Offered to help the school improve.	No action is mandated, a written comment is required for each recommendation prior to the next accreditation visit.
OPTIONS FOR THE VISIT COMMITTEE		
SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION FOR DRAFT ACCREDITATION REPORT		
Full Accredited Status		The committee would recommend this if there were no discrepancies. The school would have five years before renewal accreditation was required.
Probationary Accredited Status		The school would have two years to correct all discrepancies in the report. The school would have to complete the accreditation process again to maintain accredited status.
Loss of Accredited Status		The committee would recommend this if there were major or multiple minor discrepancies, especially if for the same standards listed in the previous draft accreditation report.

L. Review and Change Procedures.

1. Source. Proposed changes to the ACCS accreditation standards may come from any source within ACCS, including the director of accreditation. Proposed changes should be submitted to the ACCS director of accreditation.

Composition and review. The director of accreditation will:

1. Draft proposed changes to the accreditation standards. These might also include changes proposed by those at ACCS-accredited schools, as approved by the director of accreditation.
2. Share proposed changes with the association president for review and comment. If necessary, the director of accreditation will make revisions to reflect the president's input.
3. Convene an ad-hoc committee to review the proposed changes. The committee will consist of three to five members, and will be chaired by the director of accreditation. Members will include those who are qualified to lead visit committees and if needed, at least one member who is a content expert.
4. Chair the committee to review, discuss, and perhaps modify the standards. This may initially be done through a shared document for written comments prior to a conference call. Approval of the revised standards will require at least a 2/3 vote of the ad-hoc committee.
5. Submit the approved standards to the president for final approval.
6. Update the accreditation handbook, including the list of changes in the front, with the revised standards. (The director will also report these changes to VCPE and TEPSAC each year as required.)
7. Notify accredited and candidate schools of changes to the standards via email. Changes will also be posted in the MeRC.Review. An ACCS Accreditation Committee, appointed by the president, will periodically review the ACCS accreditation standards. The objective of this review will be to make any recommendations to the ACCS Board that will improve the ACCS accreditation process and procedures. The appointed committee may seek additional input from others not assigned, including, but not limited to, ACCS member schools that have been through the ACCS accreditation process.

Questions for committee consideration:

1. Are these standards, whether new or revised, consistent with the ACCS mission and vision statements, the ACCS statement of faith, and the definitions of classical and Christian found in the ACCS membership handbook?
2. Are these standards consistent with the mission statement for the ACCS school accreditation program?
3. Are there any conflicts between other accreditation standards and this proposed change.
4. Would these proposed changes improve the quality of education or the overall performance of the school? Would there be any negative impacts?
5. Would schools need time to implement these standards?

6. With the addition of these standards, are there other standards that might be eliminated to avoid creating an undue burden on accredited schools?

Review. An ACCS Accreditation Committee, appointed by the president, will periodically review the ACCS accreditation standards. The objective of this review will be to make any recommendations to the ACCS president that will improve the ACCS accreditation process and procedures. The appointed committee may seek additional input from others not assigned, including, but not limited to, ACCS member schools that have been through the ACCS accreditation process

Administrative changes. Administrative changes (spelling, punctuation, formatting) may be made by the director of accreditation without resorting to the above process so long as such emendations do not alter the intent of the current process or procedures.

M. ACCS Grievance Policy:

Grievances Brought Against an ACCS-Member School or an ACCS-Accredited School

1. Overview

- a. This policy establishes procedures for reviewing complaints brought against ACCS-member and ACCS-accredited schools.
- b. ACCS is a small organization. Personnel and financial resources limit ACCS's ability to resolve complaints to the satisfaction of all parties involved.
- c. Grievances against a school must pertain to noncompliance with at least one standard listed in the ACCS Membership Handbook or a standard in the ACCS Accreditation Handbook.
- d. Nothing in this policy will supersede the school's grievance policy as published to relevant parties.
- e. The membership coordinator receives all grievances regarding the policies, procedures, and conduct of ACCS-member schools. The director of accreditation receives all grievances regarding the policies, procedures, and conduct of ACCS-accredited schools.
- f. Throughout this process, ACCS staff are charged with following Proverbs 17:19.
- g. When a grievance raises an issue relating to a member school or an accredited school that fits the criteria described above—noncompliance with ACCS' policies or standards, the membership coordinator or the director of accreditation will follow the following procedures.

2. Procedure for filing a grievance

- a. ACCS will acknowledge and review information received alleging noncompliance by a school with ACCS's membership and/or accreditation standards, provided it meets the following criteria. ACCS will give particular consideration to allegations that an accredited school is not in compliance with

ACCS accreditation standards if the alleged violations appear to jeopardize the quality of the institution's education programs.

- b. Grievances must be submitted in writing. ACCS staff will acknowledge receipt of a grievance within ten days of its receipt and will accompany the acknowledgment with a copy of ACCS's grievance review policy. The written complaint must include the following:
 - i. A statement explaining the nature of the school's noncompliance.
 - ii. A reference to the particular standards at issue in the grievance. (ACCS staff will assist in identifying the relevant standard.)
 - iii. The name and contact information of the person bringing the allegation. The statement should also explain the complainant's relationship to the school.
 - iv. An explanation of steps that the complainant has already taken to resolve the issue directly with the school. ACCS serves as a court of appeals. It is required that complainants have followed all steps provided in the school's own grievance policy.
 - v. An explanation of exactly what action the complainant is seeking from the school.
- f. ACCS staff will review the written statement to make a determination of whether or not the submitted statement satisfies these five criteria. If the criteria are met, an investigation will be conducted. If the statement fails to meet these criteria, the complaint will be dismissed.

3. Investigation of a grievance against an institution (possible outcomes for noncompliance)

Should ACCS determine that all these criteria listed above have been met, the investigation will proceed in the following manner:

- a. ACCS staff will ask the school to provide a detailed response, with such supporting material as the institution determines is relevant, within a specified deadline (typically, not less than two weeks).
- b. After a review of documentation from the initial request, ACCS staff may seek additional information from either the school or the complainant.
- c. ACCS staff will prepare a summary statement, listing facts to which each party agrees and a second set of facts which are in dispute.
- d. ACCS staff will present this summary to an ad-hoc committee of at least three people. Committee members may include other ACCS staff members or administrators from ACCS-accredited schools.
- e. The ad-hoc committee may decide to ask ACCS staff to investigate further, including seeking information from other parties with first-hand knowledge of the issues, or may make a determination from the initial report. ACCS lacks the resources to complete an on-site investigation; however, if needed, interviews may be conducted virtually.
- f. The ad-hoc committee will make a recommendation to the ACCS president for a final decision.

- g. Once the ACCS president approves the recommendation, the school and the complainant will be notified.
 - h. ACCS may request that member schools make changes as a condition of continued membership. Accredited schools may receive recommendations, or discrepancies that would need to be corrected within a specified time period.
4. Ordinary Complaint Timetable for a Complaint Against an Institution
- a. Day 1: ACCS receives a formal complaint.
 - b. Day 30: ACCS staff determines whether or not a complaint should proceed. The staff will notify both the subject institution and the complainant of such action.
 - c. Day 45: ACCS has requested and received a response from the institution.
 - d. Day 75: The ad-hoc committee makes a determination that the complaint is without merit, has been resolved, or the complaint warrants further investigation. This may require requests for additional information from the institution or other sources. As promptly as is reasonable thereafter, the ad-hoc committee will conclude its consideration of the complaint and make a recommendation to the ACCS president.
 - e. By Day 120: Following approval from the ACCS president, ACCS will take final action in the form of a report to the those involved.
 - f. ACCS will use its best efforts to meet this timetable, but ACCS may extend or otherwise alter this timetable as circumstances require to reach a correct decision.
5. Other important considerations
- a. Grievances found to have merit shall become part of the institution's accreditation file.
 - b. Grievances dismissed as lacking merit shall not be part of the institution's accreditation file.
 - c. Member schools may appeal adverse decisions to the ACCS Board of Directors.

APPENDIX A: TYPES OF ACCS ACCREDITATION

The majority of ACCS-accredited schools are accredited under our standard accreditation, which requires a school to operate a conventional number of hours and serve grades K–12 (or K–10, see conditions). Standard Accreditation (“Accreditation” herein, unless otherwise noted): K–12 schools that may grant ACCS-authorized, high-school diplomas. 7–12 programs may request a waiver to exclude K–6 under some circumstances. For schools that do not meet the requirements for Standard Accreditation, we have endorsements that communicate to parents and interested parties the relevant limitations or extensions of the modified accreditation.

Grade configurations included under standard accreditation:

- K–12. Schools are eligible to begin the accreditation process with grades K–10 in place. The school would become “accredited” as a K–12 school, upon the graduation of their first senior class.
- 7–12. Under some circumstances, schools are eligible to seek standard accreditation. Applicants should explain how receive a classical, Christian education in grades K–6. Applications from schools with grades 9–12 will be considered but applicants will need to demonstrate how students are taught logic and Latin or Greek. Schools should explain how K–6 classical Christian education is being conducted in the community and how the school is assessing this understanding.

Multisite schools: Schools that hold classes for grades K–12 in more than one facility must address additional standards.

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

ACCS ACCREDITATION ENDORSEMENTS

Our endorsement program allows for a variety of types of accreditation available through the ACCS. Schools that want to combine endorsements must request specific approval.

ENDORSEMENTS CURRENTLY AVAILABLE: SUBMIT AN APPLICATION FOR ACCREDITATION (SEE P. III)

Collaborative (previously "Shared Instruction") Endorsement. Schools are authorized to award diplomas and will be listed as “ACCS-accredited with a “collaborative” endorsement. This form of accreditation is granted to schools that operate with non-traditional schedules or hours to share responsibility for education more heavily with parents. These schools, if they offer a full K–12 program, 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.”

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.

1. 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.1. 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.
- b. 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.
- c. 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.
 - b. Indicators: The school has a weekly schedule identifying days when students are required to attend class on-campus. Schools also have clear expectations for additional days and times for learning when students are off-campus. Schools have developed methods to ensure students are accountable for study when off-campus.
 - c. 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.
 - b. 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.
 - c. 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.
 - b. Indicators: Admission policies communicate specific expectations to parents for their involvement in student learning.

- c. Schools provide formal training for parents, often referred to as “co-teachers.”
- d. 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 co-operation 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.
- b. Indicators: In addition to a historical summary, the school should have founding principles in bylaws or other documents.
- c. 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.
- b. 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.
- c. 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.
- d. 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.
- b. 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.
- c. 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.
- b. 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.
- c. 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:

MM1. 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.
- b. Indicators: In addition to a historical summary, the school may include founding principles in school bylaws.
- c. 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

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

- 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.
- b. 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.
- c. 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.
- d. 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.
- b. 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.
- c. 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.

ENDORSEMENTS APPROVED FOR DEVELOPMENT: SUBMIT A LETTER

Approved for development: Submit a letter to the director of accreditation expressing interest in helping develop these endorsements. We are seeking trial schools to assist with standard development for this endorsement. We will initially work on those endorsements that represent large numbers of ACCS member schools. Visit committees will use a draft set of revised standards during their site visit. Recommendations for changes to the draft standards, from the school and visit committee, will be provided to the ad-hoc committee following the site visit.

Initial accreditation for these endorsements may involve one or two visits, depending on the school's readiness. All schools undergoing accreditation for the first time may earn, at most, provisional accredited status, for a maximum of two years, at which time another accreditation application and fee, self-study, and site visit are required. This helps to ensure that new schools are carefully brought into our system, and that some of the requirements, like teacher certification, are functioning. Some schools may earn provisional accredited status after the first visit while other schools may require a second visit to achieve provisional status.

Limited Grade-Level Endorsement: Schools will be listed as "ACCS-accredited with a "limited grade-level endorsement" but are not authorized to issue diplomas or certificates (ACCS endorses or otherwise). This endorsement allows schools to become ACCS accredited without a full K–12 program.

Examples include:

- Schools that serve grades K–6 (no diploma authorization)
- Schools that serve grades K–8 (no diploma authorization)

The letter should identify other options for classical Christian education in your local area. Schools that grow to a K–12 structure MUST reapply for K–12 accreditation.

Limited Student-Service Endorsement Schools will be listed as "ACCS-accredited with a "limited student-service endorsement" but are not authorized to issue diplomas or certificates (ACCS endorses or otherwise). This is given to schools that serve a specific sub-population of students, for example, learning disabled, physically disabled, missionary kids, etc. This category does not apply to schools with selective application policies that are within the spectrum of "normal."

Online School Endorsement: Schools will be listed as "ACCS-accredited with an "online school endorsement. School may award diplomas IF the school ensures that graduation requirements are met from the state students reside in. (If the school has students from students from Georgia, Tennessee, Texas, or Virginia, they must ensure that graduation requirements for these states are met.) Along with the letter of interest to the director of accreditation, complete the application for school accreditation. (Do not include the accreditation fee.) The letter and application will be sent to the ACCS Board of Directors for review and further action.

ACCREDITATION TYPES NOT AVAILABLE FROM THE ACCS

Daycare Certification: ACCS does not certify the daycare operations of member schools undergoing ACCS accreditation.

Regional Reciprocity or Direct State Recognition: Except where required by law (e.g., Tennessee), we do not offer reciprocity directly with the state, federal, or regional accreditation authorities. We do, however, accept private accreditation recognition from states that offer this service under terms that protect the independence of our schools. The ACCS school accreditation program is currently recognized by Texas, Oklahoma, Virginia, and Georgia through their private councils..

APPENDIX B: FINANCIAL INTEGRITY REQUIREMENTS

In having an independent accountant or bookkeeper respond to the questions in this document, the school will be fulfilling the requirement of Section 2, B.4 of the ACCS Accreditation Program. ACCS neither requires nor desires an audit.

These requirements have two purposes: first and foremost, to assist schools in their stewardship; and second, to avoid association with financial mismanagement. These requirements serve as guides to building financial integrity into a school's operations. Since schools accredited by ACCS are held up as examples for other schools to emulate, it is important that a school seeking ACCS accreditation have sound financial policies established and in practice.

For ACCS accreditation, a member school must have an independent financial agent/agency review and evaluate the school in each of the following six areas. **A written letter from the financial institution must be included in the school's documentation package addressing each item below and briefly describing the school's implementation of each of these requirements.**

I. Internal Controls

II. Planning

III. Financial Policies

IV. Accounting Records

V. Communication

VI. Oversight

The following paragraphs amplify the six requirements listed above, and provide specific questions that must be addressed in the letter from the independent financial institution.

I. An accredited school must adhere to effective internal controls.

Internal controls govern the way things are done at a school, things pertaining to the school's resources. They are, therefore, embodied in policies and procedures, which in turn have been designed to safeguard assets by reducing the opportunities for misappropriation or fraud. ACCS requires accredited schools to both have and adhere to effective internal controls. Furthermore, these internal controls must be embodied in written policies and procedural guidelines.

- A. Does the school have clearly defined, written policies/procedural guidelines specifically on internal controls?
- B. Do these written policies/procedural guidelines, if properly followed, reduce the opportunities for misappropriation? If not, what needs to be changed to make them so?

II. An accredited school must plan.

A budget expresses in writing the anticipated costs of operating and how those costs will be met. The budgeting process requires schools to think ahead, *i.e.*, plan. This process is based on the principle of counting the cost. It repudiates and helps prevent the sin of being anxious about tomorrow. ACCS requires schools seeking accreditation to develop written budgets for the upcoming year and encourages them to plan even further ahead, in all instances committing their way to God.

- A. Does the school have a written and board-approved budget for the current year?
- B. Does the budget show an operating deficit at the end of the fiscal year?
- C. Does the school demonstrate in its operations that it is conforming to its budget on a monthly basis?

III. An accredited school must adhere to sound financial policies.

Financial policies overlap with internal controls, but are broader in scope. They embody the principles of wise financial conduct. They promote efficiency, economy, and effectiveness. They protect integrity. ACCS requires schools seeking accreditation to both have and adhere to sound, written financial policies.

- A. Does the school have board-approved written financial policies?
- B. Do these policies provide guidance to the board, administrator, and staff in how finances are to be managed by the school? If not, what is needed to correct any deficiencies?

IV. An accredited school must maintain appropriate accounting records.

Accounting records are appropriate when they are suitable, contemporaneous, and accurate: suitable because they conform to the common principles of accounting, contemporaneous because they are kept up to date, and accurate because their contents are correctly recorded. They are the historical record of the school's financial dealings and provide experience to the planning process. ACCS requires schools seeking accreditation to maintain suitable, contemporaneous, and accurate accounting records.

- A. Does the school have an accountant?
- B. Is the accountant familiar with common principles of accounting?
- C. Are the accounting records up to date?
- D. Do the contents appear to be correctly recorded?
- E. Does the school maintain past files of their accounting records? How far back?

V. An accredited school must communicate aptly in financial matters.

Schools have financial dealings with customers, suppliers, benefactors, regulatory bodies and staff, among others. Needful information is sometimes historical, as in a report, and sometimes prospective, as in a tuition or salary agreement. Aptness means suited to the purpose. The ultimate purpose being the honoring of the Lord Jesus Christ, communication must be above reproach. It must seek to avoid misunderstanding and

misconceptions. ACCS requires schools seeking accreditation to publish, report, or otherwise disseminate information aptly.

- A. Does the school make monthly or quarterly financial reports to the school board?
- B. Does the school make an annual financial report to the school's constituency?
- C. Are these reports formatted in such a way as to make them understandable and usable?

VI. An accredited school must be overseen financially.

One of the primary safeguards of any enterprise is active oversight by those ultimately responsible. Without attentive involvement, accountability suffers. Internal controls may be sidestepped. Planning may be foregone. Sound financial policies may go unheeded. ACCS requires schools seeking accreditation to be overseen financially by their governing bodies.

- A. Does the school's bylaws or policy manual have provision for the school board to oversee the school's financial operations?
- B. Do these guidelines provide adequate checks to ensure the board that the school is complying with all of the required financial guidelines and internal controls? If not, what needs to be changed to make them so?

Evaluation

In approving a school for accreditation, ACCS will evaluate the member school's performance in the above six areas, giving appropriate weight to the evaluation letter submitted by the independent financial agency. It will also give consideration to the school's past financial dealings and current financial state.

Deficiencies

Deficiencies will be deemed either terminal or curable. **Terminal deficiencies will bar accreditation by ACCS.** Curable deficiencies will result in a probationary accreditation by ACCS. The terms of the probationary period will be determined on a case-by-case basis. Probation is intended to allow the benefits of accreditation while a school is making demonstrable progress towards meeting the financial integrity requirements, pursuant to its plan of corrective action.

Plans of corrective action

Developing a plan of corrective action is the responsibility of the applicant school, as is the implementation of the plan. Each plan must outline the specific steps that will be taken to correct deficiencies, together with a proposed timeline.

APPENDIX C: ACCREDITATION TIME LINE

Note: The days indicated below on the time line may be reduced, but should not be extended without prior mutual concurrence between ACCS and the school.

Day

0 School submits accreditation/renewal application (fees non-refundable)

7 Accreditation/renewal application received at ACCS

8 Application reviewed and approved, school notified of their approval as a Candidate for Accreditation

Note: The school has up to one year from the date of notification to submit their documentation package to ACCS for preliminary review (failure to make the one-year deadline will terminate the school's approval as a Candidate, and the process must be re-initiated)

X School's documentation package received at ACCS

X+7 The ACCS Director of Accreditation reviews the documentation package for completeness. Additions/corrections are requested from the applying school. If there are no corrections, the school is directed to send copies of the package to the assigned accreditation committee members. (Note: There may be some additional short delay at this point if ACCS determines that the package is incomplete and additional items are required. However, all required items must be submitted no later than one year from the date of the letter of notification of being approved as a Candidate for Accreditation. For this reason, it would behoove a school to submit its documentation package to ACCS for review as soon as possible.)

X+37 (Note: This approximates 30 days after the committee members have received their copy of the documentation package.) The accreditation committee completes its review and makes their recommendation to the ACCS Director of Accreditation as to whether a visit is warranted or not, and any reasons for a negative recommendation. If the recommendation is affirmative, the visit date is confirmed with the school and the accreditation committee.

X+45 Committee members purchase their own airline tickets, and send a copy of the receipt to ACCS for reimbursement. ACCS will consolidate all expenses for the visit and bill the school separately after the visit.

The school must then:

- Arrange for three single hotel rooms for the committee during the visit
- Arrange for box lunches for committee members for the days they are at the school
- Coordinate with the ACCS Director of Accreditation for the final visit schedule (see Visit Committee Handbook)

- X+90 The accreditation committee arrives
- X+91 The on-site visit begins
- X+92 The on-site visit completes. The committee determines its recommendation for the ACCS Accreditation Committee, and develops its basic comments for the final report.
- X+93 The committee reports its recommendation on accreditation to the school's administrator, and provides any supporting comments. It must be noted that the wording of the final report may be more comprehensive than the initial comments made to the school administrator.
- X+114 The committee completes its written report and sends it to the director of accreditation for review.
- X+123 A copy of the written report is sent to the school. The school may submit to ACCS a written response within 30 days that will be attached to the report.
- X+153 The director of accreditation sends a copy of the report (and the school's written response, if submitted) to the ACCS President and the visit committee chairman (or senior member). (This is the ad-hoc committee for this visit.)
- X+243 The ad-hoc committee will review the recommendation from the director of accreditation, the written report from the visit committee, and any written response from the school, and make the final determination on accreditation within 30 days of the receipt of the draft accreditation report.
- X+244 The director of accreditation will report the committee's decision to the school and any germane comments.

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. TENNESSEE SCHOOL ACCREDITATION ADDENDUM

ACCS Board Approval: January 25, 2014

Updated: December 2023

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).

A. When schools apply for ACCS accreditation, they must affirm that they are not in violation of any state laws. This statement will include the following:

CHAPTER 0520-07-02. NON-PUBLIC SCHOOL APPROVAL PROCESS

Effective: August 15, 2023

Attendance

1. Each principal or headmaster shall comply with the requirements regarding reporting the names, ages, and addresses of all pupils in attendance to the superintendent of the public school system in which the student resides.
2. Each school shall comply with minimum kindergarten age policy.

Facilities, Health, and Safety

1. 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.
2. Each school shall observe all fire safety regulations and procedures promulgated by the Tennessee Fire Marshal's Office.
3. 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.
4. 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.
5. Each head of school shall comply with the requirement 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.
6. 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.

Curriculum and Graduation

1. 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.
2. Each school shall use textbooks and instructional materials that adequately cover all subjects in the school's instructional program.
3. 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.
4. 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.

Teacher Licensure and Evaluation

1. As instructional leaders, school principals must meet the same requirements for certification as required for teachers in the ACCS teacher certification program. Written work will be submitted to the ACCS Director of Accreditation for review.
2. Each school shall develop procedures for evaluation of all teachers and principals.
3. 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.

Administrative Rules.

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. Each school shall ensure that class sizes do not exceed the class size maximums set forth in state law.
5. 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.
6. Each school shall provide periodic reports of student needs and academic progress to parents or legal guardians during each school year.

CHAPTER 0520-07-01. NON-PUBLIC SCHOOLS ADMINISTRATIVE RULES

Effective: August 15, 2023

Repository for Permanent Records

1. Schools which cease operation shall place their student academic and attendance records with the local public school district where the school was located. Schools which merge, consolidate, or undergo change of ownership may deposit their records with the continuing school rather than the local public school district. Schools shall also send a copy of student academic and attendance records to the school's accrediting or membership agency, if required by the agency. These records may be maintained electronically.
2. Schools which cease operation shall notify the Director of Schools of the public school district where the school was located and the Department utilizing the closing form provided by the Department.
3. Schools which cease operation shall give adequate public notice of the location of student records, by publicizing the name and address of the receiver of records in a local newspaper, on the school's website (if applicable), and by sending written communication by electronic or post mail to all parents of enrolled students, with a copy submitted to the Department. This notice shall be given at least thirty (30) days prior to the school's last day in operation.

Student Transfers

1. The school which the student leaves must supply a certified transcript showing the student's record of attendance, achievement, and the units of credit earned. To be certified, a transcript must be sent by the custodian of records at the student's former school to the requesting school with a signed certification acknowledging the accuracy of the transcript. The parent or guardian of the student shall be notified by the school that the transcript is being sent. However, this rule shall not be construed as to supersede any contractual obligation of parents with the private or church-related school (e.g., withholding of grades until all tuition/fees are paid).

Removed in 2023:

1. Each school shall have a minimum of five days for in-service education per school year.
2. Schools must teach the following courses for the indicated credits:
 - a. Economics/Government 1.0
 - b. Wellness 1.0
 - c. Physical Education 0.5
 - d. Personal Finance 0.5

3. 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.

4. 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.

APPENDIX E: ACCS BOARD POLICIES RELATED TO ACCS ACCREDITATION

RATIONALE FOR ACCREDITING

Dates: Approved 3/12/02

Objective: To establish the rationale for accreditation of ACCS member schools that have grades 1–10, in process to becoming grades 1–12.

Scope: This policy applies to all ACCS member schools applying to ACCS for accreditation.

Guidelines:

- A. ACCS accreditation policy only allows for the accreditation of ACCS member schools that have been in operation as a classical and Christian school for at least five years, and that have grown to the point where they have classes ranging from, as a minimum, grades 1–10, and are in process of growing to become a full 1–12 school. ACCS is committed to accrediting only schools that meet these criteria because they can demonstrate that they are committed to providing the whole spectrum of the Trivium: grammar, dialectic, and rhetoric, consistent with the developmental stages of their students, Poll-parrot, Pert, and Poetic.
- B. In addition, where multiple schools exist in the same locale, viz., a grammar school and a secondary school, with both operating under different school boards, ACCS will not accredit both schools as though they were one single school. ACCS is committed to accrediting the entire Trivium. Although multiple schools may provide all aspects of the Trivium, the separate school governments are a concern with regard to longevity of the mutual relationship, and consequently, such a relationship may be unable to commit long term to providing all stages of the Trivium. For example, if one school should choose to go a different direction, in doing so, it would remove those stages of the Trivium from the overall instruction provided by both schools. Because of the tenuous nature of such an arrangement, ACCS is not willing to accredit schools in this situation.

5.10 OUTSIDE INFLUENCE POLICY

Dates: Approved 1/30/20

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

Definitions: “Government funding” for schools includes grants, tax credits, educational savings accounts, vouchers, third-party pass-through funding, or other means of funding that can be conditioned upon the school.

Guidelines: ACCS-accredited schools may not accept funds if the school is required to sign an agreement with the government or outside organization in order 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 state funding, any strings must immediately be severed.

APPENDIX F: SAMPLE SUBMISSION PACKAGE

ACCS Accreditation Standards

Recommendation: Pick any one of the accreditation standards. Follow the instructions to document and explain the school's compliance with that standard. Send this documentation and explanation for this one standard to the director of accreditation for review before proceeding on to the completion of the rest of the accreditation standards.

To be granted ACCS accreditation subsequent to being approved as a Candidate for Accreditation, a school must demonstrate that it has successfully met the following Criteria for Accreditation and that it can be reasonably expected to continue to achieve such:

Standard B.6. Enrollment and Employment Stability: The school must disclose data for the past five years in the following trends 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.

First, schools must use documentation to “show” compliance with each standard. This is the more important of the two steps.

Documentation: (“Show”) (All must be published.)

1. Grammar/Secondary/Total Enrollment Numbers for past five years
 2. Enrollment Trends: Summary Report
 3. Teacher Retention Rates for past five years
 4. Administrator Retention Rates for past five years
- Second, schools must “tell” the reviewer how the documentation demonstrates compliance. Also, when long documents are used, tell the reviewer specifically where to look.

Explanation: (“Tell”)

1. Enrollment rates have remained relatively stable over the last five years, with an average retention rate of 93%. See Enrollment Trends: Summary Report for explanation of trend causes and effects over the last five years.
2. Teacher retention rates have remained steady for the last five years for an average of 89%.
3. Likewise, administrator retention rates have remained steady for the last five years for an average of 89%.
4. Faculty/Staff Retention: Each year faculty and staff move on from ABC Academy mostly due to retirement, family needs, or to pursue other interests. Salary pressure in the context of a small Christian school is also a contributing factor, and the board and administration continue to seek ways to improve the compensation of staff. As can be expected, we also have had a small percentage of staff and faculty that have not had contracts renewed over the last five years due to poor job performance.

APPENDIX G: INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS: SELF-EVALUATION TOOL

How to use this tool: In the months before an accreditation visit, use this tool to train your teachers. Review these principles in staff meetings, then ask your teachers to implement these methods. Follow up training with informal observations to see teachers put these principles into practice. This way, when it's time for the site visit, teachers will have practiced teaching lessons that are consistent with these principles.

How NOT to use this tool: Please do not tell your teachers to overtly demonstrate these techniques on the day our accreditors visit their class. Direct your teachers to teach normally. Visit committee members are not seeking a demonstration, they need to see what your school's daily practice. We don't expect to see these techniques in every classroom observation.

Do NOT instruct teachers to stop the flow of the lesson so that they may present one of the techniques listed here. For example, grammar teachers should not present recitations for each visit committee member. Nor should they recite a memory verse each period. Visit committee members do not expect to see every method in every lesson.

Grammar School

1. The teacher demonstrates the attitudes, behaviors, and enthusiasm for the subject that he/she hopes to instill in the learners. "A student is not above his teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like his teacher" (Luke 6:40).
2. Are teachers using songs and choral recitations (chants, jingles, etc.) to help students memorize facts? Do teachers have students memorize and recite passages of literature, Scripture, etc.? Do teachers use "call and response" and catechisms?
3. Are students using motions and movement in the acquiring and remembering of facts/concepts? Do lessons for the youngest students appeal to as many senses as possible?
4. Does each lesson start with a review of prior material? Are there frequent reviews of facts and memorization? Do teachers use classroom transitions to review facts?
5. Does the teacher ask students what they already know about the subject, so that the teacher may start the lesson from that point (as opposed to assuming the students know nothing and teaching the same information over again)?
6. Are students encouraged to express and articulate what they are discovering/learning in their own words (show and tell, read aloud, tell stories, etc.)?
7. Do students have opportunity to explore, find, collect, and identify in the environment around them?
8. Are teachers teaching to an objective that is clear to students and evident to an observer?

9. During the lesson, do teachers assess student understanding in order to gauge whether students comprehend the material?

Logic School

The following types of activities should be observed in all courses, i.e., history, literature, math, and science, not only in the logic class.

1. Do units or lessons begin with questions that frame the concept, idea, or skill under consideration?
2. Do teachers engage students so that students are active participants in the lesson and learning?
3. Do teachers ask questions that require students to go beyond yes or no answers, or short, rote responses? Are teachers asking “why” a lot?
4. Do teachers engage students in solving questions or analyzing answers, following up student responses by asking students to defend, refute, or explain their answers?
5. Are there frequent teacher-led and even student-led discussions (Socratic circles, fishbowl, etc.)? Are students working problems on the board, or discussing in small groups and reporting to the larger group?
6. Are teachers using time lines and charts in such a way as to compare, contrast, and juxtapose ideas and events with and against one another?
7. Are teachers using different forms of debate and discussion such that students are considering arguments and lines of thought in a cohesive way?
8. Are principles of logic integrated in classes other than logic class?
9. Does the lesson include time for reviewing of prior material, e.g., at the beginning and end of the lesson?
10. Are teachers teaching to an objective that is clear to students and evident to an observer?
11. During the lesson, do teachers assess student understanding in order to gauge whether students are comprehending the material?

Rhetoric School

The following types of activities should be observed in all courses, i.e., history, literature, math, and science, not only in the rhetoric class.

1. Do teachers or students do most of the intellectual work in the class? Are students active participants (or passive recipients) in classroom learning?
2. Do the teacher's instructions require creativity, as well as clarity, in written and spoken work?
3. What is the ratio of “teacher-talk” vs. “student-talk” time in the classroom? (The expectation is that the higher the grade level, the more classroom discussion and student participation.)
4. Do teachers attempt to engage all students? Are “discussions” primarily voluntary, or does the teacher normally use involuntary assessments? Is it possible to hide in this class and not be involved?

5. If students wait long enough, will the teacher provide the answers to their own questions? Does the teacher repeat all student answers or are the students required to listen to each others' answers?
6. Do students ask questions? Do students ask each other questions? Or is the class mainly students responding to teacher questions?
7. Do students work problems on the board or in small groups, with other students “coaching” or helping, with teachers acting as “quality control?”
8. Do students routinely discuss questions of content and meaning using seminar-style discussions? Are these discussions generally student-driven, at least in the upper rhetoric grades?
9. Is Socratic dialogue used in classrooms? Are Harkness table discussions used in the classrooms?
10. Are students frequently speaking at length in their own words in the form of presentations, etc.?
11. Does the lesson include time for reviewing of prior material, e.g., at the beginning and end of the lesson?
12. Are teachers teaching to an objective that is clear to students and evident to an observer?
13. During the lesson, do teachers assess student understanding in order to gauge whether students are comprehending the material?

Written Assignments and Grading

1. Do assignments and tests include more open-ended and essay-type questions than those at the grammar or logic levels?
2. On tests/exams are students writing complete thoughts rather than multiple choice, one-word answers, etc.?
3. Do students take oral tests/exams?
4. Is classroom participation assessed at the rhetoric level?

Classroom Observations, Teacher Training, Etc.

1. Does an administrator regularly observe classroom instruction and provide specific feedback based on these observations? Do administrators evaluate teachers on their application of the tools of learning?
2. Are teachers expected to develop lesson plans that teach to a particular objective for student learning?
3. Is ongoing teacher training provided during the school year? Are the topics of this training designed to strengthen weaknesses identified during classroom observations?
4. Do administrators provide annual teacher training in the Seven Laws of Teaching?
5. On weekly lesson plans, are teachers expected to indicate how they are teaching classically (perhaps one example for the week)?
6. Do curriculum guides include a section that reminds teachers to integrate the tools of learning?

APPENDIX H: ACCS TEACHER CERTIFICATION

Revision 1— 2004

Revision 2— 2017. Required for schools who are accredited or under accreditation renewal after January 1, 2018. Teachers who were certified under the 2004 standards are grandfathered into their current level of certification, but must meet the 2017 standards to advance to the next level.

Note on implementation: ACCS-accredited schools, with existing teacher certification programs approved by ACCS, will need to develop revised programs compliant with these guidelines when they renew ACCS school accreditation. These schools may elect to do so sooner, at their discretion, if desired.

Requirements

- A. All accredited ACCS schools must certify their full-time teaching staff in accordance with this document. (In their specific plan, schools will address how part-time staff are to be included. Part-time staff may be exempt from mandatory aspects of ACCS teacher certification.)
- B. All provisional, professional, and master level certifications must be registered with the ACCS by the accredited school.
- C. All accredited ACCS schools are asked to recognize the certification level of any teacher who transfers from another ACCS-accredited school.

Purpose

ACCS Teacher Certification provides schools and administrators with a common understanding of what a classical Christian teacher should be, and a structure by which a path to excellence can be awarded. Teacher certification should verify the presence of demonstrable philosophical understanding and competent teaching skills in the one certified. ACCS Teacher Certification has no relationship or connection to state teacher licensing or public school certification.

Philosophy

Modern (public) teacher certification prescribes a series of courses and some service in the classroom. This system arises from the idea that most people can be trained to do the job. Classical Christian philosophy asserts that teaching is a gift (Ephesians 4:8–11, Romans 12: 3–8), and a practiced art. For those who have the gift (and it is given, as all spiritual gifts, in varying degrees), it must also be developed. The ancients did this through an apprenticeship.

Rather than passing a prescribed course of classes, apprenticeship involves a combination of training, observed instruction, imitation of a master, and evaluation by a master. Historically, this process takes artisans from novice to apprentice, to journeyman, to master.

In this light, the ACCS teacher certification system is built around the local accredited school. We believe that those who serve alongside a teacher know them best. And, we believe that mastery is assessed in community, with the local organization's people as the keepers of the flame, so to speak. Nationally, we provide these guidelines to ensure that each local school is able to understand and provide a consistent standard to teachers. Rather than the apprenticeship terms above, we use three more common terms: provisional, professional, and master level certification.

Guidelines

Certification is awarded to a teacher who can demonstrate that he or she has met the following primary requirements. The categories listed below are important and none may be excluded. However, ACCS desires to establish a somewhat flexible process for demonstrating competence. The measures of competence listed below are presumed to be those most common to classical Christian schools. They are not meant to be the only means to demonstrate competence. School administrators may substitute alternative forms of assessment of teacher competencies as they deem them necessary and appropriate.

Once the administrator of an ACCS-accredited school has established the school-specific guidelines in accordance with the below framework, they must be submitted to the ACCS Director of Accreditation for mutual concurrence before becoming, or they will become the accepted norm for that school.

When a teacher completes the requirements for a given level of competency, the administrator will need to enter the ACCS Member's Resource Center (MRC) and fill out the teacher certification form indicating the teacher's name, the level attained, and the date it was attained. (See <https://mrc.classicalchristian.org/certified-teacher-list/>) ACCS will record this information in our database and mail back a certificate for the administrator to sign and present to the teacher, commemorating the achievement.

Verification

The local school administrator of an ACCS-accredited school is authorized to determine whether competency has been demonstrated for purposes of ACCS Teacher Certification. The school administrator is only authorized to grant teacher certification to teachers who work for the same school as the administrator. However, teachers themselves will receive a certificate acknowledging their certification. Teachers can expect to transfer this certificate and status as an ACCS certified teacher to any other ACCS member school.

Certification requirements

I. Provisional certification: Candidates for a provisional teaching certificate must demonstrate that they have met the following qualifications. These must be done by the start of the second year of the teacher's full-time tenure at the school.

A. Fundamental training in classical Christian education

- Evidenced by a training course taken as offered by the employee's school, prior training in classical Christian education at the collegiate level, previous classical conference attendance, ACCS

endorsed training (live or online) in classical Christian pedagogy, or the ACCS Foundation of Classical Christian Excellence course (FCCE), available in January 2019.

- Philosophy of the Christian aspects of classical Christian education
- Evidenced by the submission of a written paper to the administrator for review after completing requisite readings.

C. Philosophy of the pedagogical or classical aspects of classical Christian education

- Evidenced by the submission of a written paper to the administrator for review after completing requisite readings.

D. Knowledge of subject matter

- Evidenced by the successful completion of thirty hours of college credit, or equivalent experience in the main content area.

E. Knowledge of children

- Best evidenced by parenting of own children. May be enhanced, or, if childless, introduced through the study of children's development and training, according to biblically grounded authors. In addition, prior experience with children of the applicable age(s).

F. Knowledge of the teaching process

- Evidenced by reading and providing some written response to *The Seven Laws of Teaching*.

II. **Professional certification** (called ACCS-Certified Teacher): Teachers who have been teaching full-time at the issuing school for more than three years must achieve this level of certification or be placed on probation until it is completed.

A. Completion of all requirements for the Provisional Certification.

B. Completion of the ACCS Foundation of Classical Christian Excellence course (FCCE)¹. (This requirement to take effect January 2019.)

C. Demonstration of successful teaching with a minimum of three years of successful teaching experience at an ACCS-accredited school. Success is measured by the receipt of positive personnel evaluations during that three-year period.

¹ This course is offered periodically by the ACCS at the *Repairing the Ruins* conference, as a video course online (free to members), or through an ACCS Certified Training partner or event.

D. Evidence of continual learning

1. Documented and personal evidence that teachers are continuing to learn and grow in their interest and knowledge of the above areas, particularly in their understanding and application of the classical Christian philosophy.
2. Two practical demonstrations of this continuing interest are the amount and type of reading done, as well as continued through classical Christian teacher training.

III. **Master's certification**

- A. Completion of all requirements for the professional certification.
 - B. Evidence of training in the Trivium.
 - C. The involvement of the teacher in the development of uniquely classical curriculum within the school, training other teachers within the school, or conducting training in classical Christian education on a national level.
 - D. The teacher will demonstrate personal knowledge and understanding of logic and rhetoric.
- ACCS recommends the "History of Classical and Christian Education" a graduate-level course for educators from New Saint Andrews college. Learn more at <https://nsa.seththoburn.com/history-of-classical-and-christian-education>.