



# REACH 2.1

## Standards Manual for Accreditation

for EE–12 North American and International Schools—2016 Edition

# Standard 1: Philosophy and Foundations

The school has developed written statements of philosophy, mission, vision, core values, and schoolwide expected student outcomes as well as a statement of faith. These statements are well defined, systematically reviewed, and broadly implemented throughout the school. They outline the school's Christian distinctives and communicate a clear purpose and direction for school effectiveness and student growth and development.

## STANDARD JUSTIFICATION

Biblical principles support, influence, and drive all aspects of the school's philosophy and foundations, which provide perspective for the past, give context to the present, and establish direction for the future of the school and its educational programs. The Christian school looks to the Bible as the primary source for all its foundational statements of education. Because the Bible is the inspired, inerrant, infallible Word of God, the philosophy, mission, vision, and core values derived from it will be God-honoring. Christian schools exist because their philosophy is unique in the educational world. Christian school philosophy is based on belief in Jesus Christ, who said in John 14:6, "I am ... the truth," and in John 17:17, "Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth" (NIV).

In determining its educational philosophy and guiding statements, every school must ask these questions:

1. Why does our school exist?
2. What are the biblical implications for educational priorities and practices?
3. What are the distinctives that set us apart?
4. What are the goals of our school?
5. How will these goals be achieved?
6. What are the characteristics of a student completing the school's educational program? (What are our schoolwide expected student outcomes?)

Philosophy and guiding statements must be written clearly and concisely if they are to give the school direction and permeate every part of its life. The faculty, staff, governing body, parents, and other stakeholders should be involved in formulating, reviewing, and revising these documents. These statements should also be inculcated into the key elements of the school annually.

Of equal importance is the value this philosophical development process has in melding the school together as an educational institution. The task of preparing, communicating, and regularly reviewing the philosophy statement is foundational to the evaluation necessary for accreditation and is central to the healthy life of the school. The more the executive leadership, staff, and governing body come to know and express the guiding statements of the school, the greater the impact will be on the families and the community.

If the school is part of a larger entity, responses must include how the philosophy and guiding statements are specifically applicable to the school, including the early education program.

## INDICATORS

Symbols next to indicators apply as follows:

- (C)—Comprehensively applies to every level of a school being accredited (grades EE–12)  
(E/S)—Applies only to K–12 schools  
(EE)—Applies only to early education programs that are stand-alone or a part of a K–12 school being accredited

All indicators in **boldface** are considered critical.

- 1.1 The statement of faith and the philosophy, mission, vision, core values, and schoolwide expected student outcome statements of the school are established and are reviewed regularly and systematically in a collaborative manner.** (C)
- 1.2 The school communicates its philosophy, mission, vision, core values, and schoolwide expected student outcomes to its constituents and community. (C)
- 1.3 The foundational documents are consistently applied as integrative, coordinating, and examining devices throughout all aspects of the programs, operations, and curriculum.** (C)
- 1.4 The executive leadership, faculty, and staff continually support the advancement of the philosophy, mission, and vision of the school. (C)
- 1.5 From a distinctively Christian perspective, all staff demonstrate a commitment to the development of the whole child—spiritually, intellectually, physically, emotionally, and socially (Luke 2:52). (C)

**Brief Narrative:** In one to two pages, explain how the standard is met or what the barriers, if any, are to compliance. If the school is not found to be in compliance, what needs to occur for it to become compliant? Identify what data most relevant to mission attainment the school regularly collects in this standard area and what systems are in place to analyze the data and ensure implementation of improvement strategies. (Use your indicator ratings, documentation, and other sources to validate your explanation.)

**Strengths:** State one to three strengths that exemplify compliance in this area.

**Areas for Continuous School Improvement:** State one to three goals that reflect continuous school improvement in this area.

### Required Documentation and Supporting Evidence:

The Required Documentation must be evaluated as the school rates themselves on the indicators. Provide all required documentation and supporting evidences used by the school in rating the indicators. These will verify compliance with the standard.

### Required Documentation

- Philosophy, vision, mission statements, beliefs, and core values
- Statement of faith
- School profile
- Schoolwide expected student outcomes
- Samples of communications with parents, students, and constituents

- Wide distribution of the mission, vision, and philosophy statements and goals throughout the school community
- Linkage established in the curriculum guides/plans and the teacher lesson plans to the stated mission, vision, philosophy, and goals of the school

### **Supporting Evidence**

- Involvement by parents, staff, students, and community members in the formation and/or processing of the school's vision, philosophy, foundations, and goals
- Indication by parents, staff, students, and community members that they are familiar with the school's mission, vision, philosophy, foundations, and goals
- Leadership actions that develop commitment to the mission and the vision
- Constituent understanding of how the allocation of resources within the school reflects the stated vision, philosophy, and goals
- Perceptions among the constituents regarding the extent to which the articulated vision, purpose, and goals characterize the operation of the school
- Surveys/evaluation instruments and results
- Annual and long-range goals
- Handbooks, policy manuals
- Newsletters, brochures, and other publications containing information about the vision and purpose
- Other

# Standard 2: Governance and Executive Leadership

The school has Christ-centered governance and executive leadership that promotes effectiveness of the school and growth of the student through an established structure that contributes to an operationally and financially sound Christian educational institution. The executive leadership and governing body work in partnership to ensure the integrity, effectiveness, and reputation of the institution through the establishment of written policies and procedures. The head of school is responsible for the supervision of all operations of the school and implementation of board policies.

## STANDARD JUSTIFICATION

### Governance

Schools vary widely according to location, culture, purpose, and sponsorship; every school has specific nuances. Together, the variables create the distinctive nature of the school. Just as each school is unique, each is also similar in the areas of need and stakeholder expectations. Most important, the governing body provides vibrant spiritual leadership when addressing their responsibilities.

The governing body of a school is a body of informed decision makers who commit to worthy, ongoing pursuits. Oversight includes accountability, evaluation, advocacy, facilitation of the collaborative creation of guiding statements, and policy development.

Educational institutions receive enthusiastic support when they secure the confidence of the constituency in operational matters. Sound business practices are foundational to the growth, development, and ongoing testimony of Christian schools. Every reasonable step should be taken to establish and maintain a strong relationship of financial trust between the governing body and executive leadership, faculty, and the school community. As a result, an atmosphere of mutual respect and purpose exists between all parties on behalf of the students and their learning.

The governing body empowers the head of school to make day-to-day decisions concerning the implementation of the policies and programs being offered by the school. These policies reflect the mission, vision, core values, and philosophy of the education program. The role of the governing body is not to manage the day-to-day operation of the school but to empower the head of school by establishing appropriate policies to accomplish the mission of the school. Generally, the head of school is the sole employee of the board, and staff members report to the head of school. Some church-sponsored schools have different reporting structures, and the head of school could report to a pastor, executive pastor, or church board in addition to a school board. In these situations, it is critically important that roles and reporting relationships are clearly established and communicated.

### Executive Leadership

Educational leaders must have a clear testimony of faith in Jesus Christ. They must be spiritually qualified and be committed to the doctrine, philosophy, goals, vision, and mission of the school. Educational leaders are held to a high biblical standard of accountability for their actions and demeanor (James 3:1, Titus 1:7–9, and 1 Timothy 3:1–13). Schools that are seeking to influence the spiritual growth of students and families must be led by individuals who have strong spiritual, as well as professional,

qualifications. The character and work ethic of the leadership are tied to a higher purpose: “Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men” (Colossians 3:23).

The personal and professional qualifications of the head of school have a significant influence on the entire school. The leadership skills of the head of school enhance the effectiveness of the entire educational faculty and staff. As the leader of the school, the head of school is responsible for the development of the curricula, the spiritual formation of the students, and the foundational principles for the programs.

Faculty and staff members are invited to participate in leadership through ideas, solutions, and perspectives they bring to the process. Collaboration is invited and valued, and the head of school nurtures this culture in the school.

Note: *Head of school* always refers to the chief administrator. Titles for that role vary significantly from school to school (for example, principal, administrator, headmaster, head of school, director, president, superintendent).

## INDICATORS

Symbols next to indicators apply as follows:

(C)—Comprehensively applies to every level of a school being accredited (grades EE–12)

(E/S)—Applies only to K–12 schools

(EE)—Applies only to early education programs that are stand-alone or a part of a K–12 school being accredited

All indicators in **boldface** are considered critical. Indicators which are marked with an asterisk (\*) **must** be met at the “compliance” level or higher for a team visit to occur.

- 2.1 A governing body has been established, and its primary responsibilities include: developing general school governance policy; hiring the head of school; providing direction and strategic planning; ensuring the financial stability, effectiveness, and consistency between all campuses of the institution; defining the role of the governing body; defining the role of the head of school, and conducting systematic board self-evaluation. (C)
- 2.2 **The governance and executive leadership team of the school reflects a clear Christ-centered governance and executive leadership model. A policy is in place that requires a testimony and evidence of faith in Jesus Christ from all board members and executive leadership.** (C)
- 2.3 The governing body supports the head of school’s prerogatives and responsibilities, and it provides for an appropriate annual evaluation of the head of school. (C)
- 2.4 Constituents and stakeholders are provided appropriate input by leadership in the decision-making process, a practice that promotes a culture of participation, responsibility, transparency, and ownership. (C)
- 2.5 **Established written policies and procedures promote effective operations in admissions, governance, finance, and other operational aspects. Appropriate legal documents and clearly**

articulated articles of incorporation, governing body policies, and bylaws are established and are available for review. (C)

2.6 Established written policies are in place to see that the educational and developmental needs of each admitted student are being met on the basis of biblical principles, professional ethics, and high standards. Staff members are sensitive to the culture, gender, language, and special needs of students and their families. (C)

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

2.8 The budget is constructed carefully—using input from program heads—and is managed properly in accordance with the stated goals of the school. The budget reflects an accurate assessment of the cost of educating a student, including instructional supplies and informational technology. Stated student outcomes are appropriately financed. (C)

2.9 A review of the school's finances is conducted by an external CPA who has no vested interest in the school at the time of initial accreditation and renewal. The annual statement of financial practices is submitted with the annual accreditation report. (See *Options for Meeting Indicator 2.9 for details.*) (C)

2.9a Stand-alone preschool programs, with an annual budget of \$250,000 or less, may choose to have an annual examination of their finances in lieu of a financial statement review. The examination must be completed by a qualified accountant who is independent of the program and its sponsoring church, school, or board. (EE)

2.10 Just compensation packages are documented for all employees and are commensurate with the training and services rendered. (C)

2.11\* The school ensures compliance with *applicable local, state, and federal laws*, and it is in good standing with all regulatory agencies. (C)

**Brief Narrative:** In one to two pages, explain how the standard is met or what the barriers, if any, are to compliance. If the school is not found to be in compliance, what needs to occur for it to become compliant? Identify what data most relevant to mission attainment the school regularly collects in this standard area and what systems are in place to analyze the data and ensure implementation of improvement strategies. (Use your indicator ratings, documentation, and other sources to validate your explanation.)

**Strengths:** State one to three strengths that exemplify compliance in this area.

**Areas for Continuous School Improvement:** State one to three goals that reflect continuous school improvement in this area.

#### Required Documentation and Supporting Evidence:

The Required Documentation must be evaluated as the school rates themselves on the indicators. Provide all required documentation and supporting evidences used by the school in rating the indicators. These will verify compliance with the standard.

#### Required Documentation

- Governing body policy manual and bylaws
- Operational policy and procedures manual
- Organizational chart (offices, roles, terms, etc.)
- Budget development plan and budget documents
- Admissions policies and procedures
- Governing body and leadership job descriptions (including testimony and evidence of faith)
- Financial audits or reviews
- Governing body and leadership evaluation instruments
- Long- and short-range goals/plans
- Certificates of compliance with local, state, federal, and provincial laws if applicable
- Salary and benefits/compensations documentation
- Provide documentation that shows a clear understanding of the role of the board and the administration
- Provide documentation of understanding among the constituency of the decision-making procedures of the school and evidence of securing appropriate stakeholder input in the process
- Evidence of liability insurance
- Hiring procedures

#### Supporting Evidence

- Information (agendas/minutes) on constituency meetings offered by the school
- Brochures and other publications on admissions
- Tuition and fee rates
- Program and/or project descriptions
- Governing body minutes
- Understanding among constituency of the specific and general policies and procedures established within the school
- An evaluation of instructional and organizational effectiveness
- Meaningful leadership roles assigned throughout the school community
- Accomplishments of subordinate leaders within the school community
- Leadership opportunities provided by parent and community groups to school operations
- Avenues for two-way communication with constituency

# Standard 3: Home and Community Relations and Student Services

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

## STANDARD JUSTIFICATION

Clear statements and communication of philosophy and mission will attract mission-appropriate families and result in students being enrolled in the school. Each school should evaluate the nature and quality of its relationships with the families and the like-minded churches it serves in the local community.

Since parents are a child's primary teachers, schools must respect the critical role parents play in supporting the growth and development of their child. Scripture clearly establishes the parental mandate to teach spiritual truths throughout all aspects of daily life (Deuteronomy 6:6–7). The education offered in a Christian school must be Christ-centered. Effective partnerships with parents are a vital part of quality education. A rapport is built between staff and parents that supports communication between the home and the education program.

Before the child's attendance at school, parents/guardians are oriented to the philosophy, curriculum, guidance policies, assessment practices, and operating procedures in an interactive process that provides staff of the school with information about the child and the family. The staff actively initiates relationships with families cultivating communication and providing multiple avenues for ongoing parent involvement and feedback.

Guidance includes assessing and assisting students in their initial adjustment to the school, and then it continues with counseling as needed during subsequent years. Sound counsel requires an understanding of the student and includes assessments of ability and achievement. In secondary school, these responsibilities take on added significance as students begin to seek vocational direction and assess their academic preparation and the development of their gifts and personalities.

Student activities are another component of education. A Christian school must be certain that the activities are carried out in a way that furthers the desired schoolwide expected student outcomes in the life of the student. It is possible for schools to be strongly Christian in the classroom but to take on secular norms in their cocurricular activities. A philosophical foundation of biblical integration must also be readily apparent in the activities outside the classroom. Activities of all kinds open unique opportunities for influencing students. In many cases, the public display and testimony of a school's Christian philosophy is most evident in the arena of activities.

## INDICATORS

Symbols next to indicators apply as follows:

(C)—Comprehensively applies to every level of a school being accredited (grades EE–12)

(E/S)—Applies only to K–12 schools

(EE)—Applies only to early education programs that are stand-alone or a part of a K–12 school being accredited

All indicators in **boldface** are considered critical. Indicators which are marked with an asterisk (\*) **must** be met at the “compliance” level or higher for a team visit to occur.

**3.1 Enrollment is sufficient to establish the viability of the school and all divisions it offers (i.e., EE, primary, elementary, secondary).** (C)

3.2 The school conducts regular demographic assessments of its constituents in light of the stated mission: (1) educational levels, (2) ethnic diversity, (3) faith backgrounds, and (4) other pertinent family information. (C)

3.3 The length of the school day and year, as well as the number of instructional hours and days, complies with state or provincial laws, if applicable. (E/S)

3.4 Regular, established, and effective two-way communication occurs between the school and its constituents. (C)

3.4a Conferences with each child's parents/guardians are offered twice per year and at other times as needed to discuss the child's growth and developmental progress. (EE)

3.5 The school has established biblical principles for resolving differences between the school and its constituents. These policies are written, reviewed, and communicated for effective implementation. (C)

3.6 The school systematically seeks input/feedback from current and past students and other constituents in order to adjust its instructional and operational practices. Survey data is regularly gathered and analyzed for feedback regarding program satisfaction. (C)

**3.7\* The nondiscrimination statement is published and evident in the actions, relationships, and programs of the school.** (C)

## Guidance and Support Services

3.8 High school guidance services provide academic course selection along with college and career planning. (E/S)

3.9 The school has a process to identify the unique learning needs of individual students and support is provided in order for them to meet the expected student outcomes. (C)

3.10 The school communicates effectively with families regarding all guidance services provided by the school. (C)

**3.11 Confidential records of students are complete, organized, current, accessible only to appropriate personnel, compliant with applicable legal requirements, and kept in a safe location.** (C)

## Student Activities

3.12 Student activities are consistent with the mission of the school, are a balanced variety, and are reflective of the needs of all students. (E/S)

## Personal Care, Support, and Advocacy for Children

3.13 The director ensures that daily transitions and regrouping of children are minimized through organization, written policies, and staffing. (EE)

3.14 Each group of children has one primary teacher/caregiver to help ensure that the individual child is cared for and nurtured. (EE)

3.15 Staff members intentionally prepare and maintain an emotionally healthy environment (outlined in the *EE Evidence Guide for REACH Indicators*). (EE)

3.16 The program has a written plan to address children who exhibit varying needs. Needs may include developmental delays, special needs, or English language learners (outlined in the *EE Evidence Guide for REACH Indicators*). (EE)

3.17 Families are provided with materials and resources to assist with health and educational needs of their child and are invited to participate in classroom activities. (EE)

**Brief Narrative:** In one to two pages, explain how the standard is met or what the barriers, if any, are to compliance. If the school is not found to be in compliance, what needs to occur for it to become compliant? Identify what data most relevant to mission attainment the school regularly collects in this standard area and what systems are in place to analyze the data and ensure implementation of improvement strategies. (Use your indicator ratings, documentation, and other sources to validate your explanation.)

**Strengths:** State one to three strengths that exemplify compliance in this area.

**Areas for Continuous School Improvement:** State one to three goals that reflect continuous school improvement in this area.

## Required Documentation and Supporting Evidence:

The Required Documentation must be evaluated as the school rates themselves on the indicators. Provide all required documentation and supporting evidences used by the school in rating the indicators. These will verify compliance with the standard.

## Required Documentation

- Constituent (past and present) surveys and demographic surveys
- Schedules of parent conferences
- Student orientation programs
- List of student activities offered and qualifications of supervising staff
- Parent/student handbooks
- Any documentation used for student transition to the next grade level
- Advisory programs for students and the student referral process
- Inclusion policy for students who have special needs, if applicable
- School calendar and other publications that reflect the number of hours and days required
- Various methods in which the school communicates with constituents
- The inclusion of dialogue with constituents in the communication process and evidence that the school responds to constituent input
- Planning and implementation of inclusion plans for students who have special needs, if applicable

## Supporting Evidence

- Perception data from constituents regarding their feeling of affiliation with the school and of being well-informed regarding school issues and events
- The use of focus groups to process issues
- Individuals and groups representative of the community that participate in the work of the school
- A wide variety of forums in which expectations for students and for school improvement are presented
- Parent and student knowledge of expectations regarding student behavior and learning and of school improvement initiatives
- Data regarding student's feeling of acceptance within the school and readiness for success at the next level
- Surveys
- Agendas/minutes of constituent meetings, trainings, or presentations
- Student progress reports
- Reports to the community about the school and its students
- Course selection and/or student planning guides
- Communication plans (such as school and/or teacher websites, newsletters, letters, e-mails, automated phone messages)
- Access to online reporting of student achievement results (grades, homework, etc.)
- Career planning programs

# Standard 4: Personnel

The school hires personnel who have made a personal commitment to follow Jesus Christ and endorse the school's statement of faith. They are committed to the written philosophy, mission, vision, and core values of the school. Faculty and staff engage in ongoing professional development to improve instructional practices leading to continual growth in student learning and development of the instructional program. The executive leadership, instructional, and support staff are sufficient in number to provide for the effective delivery of quality education and are appropriately credentialed, degreed, trained, and qualified for their assigned duties.

## STANDARD JUSTIFICATION

The heart of the Christian school is the people who serve God on the instructional, noninstructional, and administrative staff. Every staff member is vital to the ministry to students. Because students learn so much through what they observe, the character, attitudes, and words of Christian teachers have great influence on the lives of students in their care. Scripture affirms that students become like their teachers (Luke 6:40). The faculty and the other staff establish the professional and spiritual quality of the school.

One of the most essential ways Christian educators follow Christ's example in their instructional practices is by building relationships with students and tailoring their responses to individual needs (1 Corinthians 9:19–23). Another way is by dedication to growth in professional knowledge and instructional skill (1 Timothy 4:15–16). Teachers' professional and spiritual growth strengthens their impact on children's spiritual and intellectual development.

The educational qualifications of the faculty and staff and the training they have received in the field play a significant role in the quality of schools. Degreed and trained educators are also better equipped in developing age-appropriate goals and activities for children. Student/teacher ratios, class size, and staff turnover can also make an impact on the learning environment and the function of a school. Every effort should be made to cultivate quality faculty for long-term service.

Certification of administrators and faculty is an important component in the accreditation of schools. The purpose of the ACSI certification program is to provide qualified Christian school educators with professional credentials.

## INDICATORS

Symbols next to indicators apply as follows:

**(C)**—Comprehensively applies to every level of a school being accredited (grades EE–12)

**(E/S)**—Applies only to K–12 schools

**(EE)**—Applies only to early education programs that are stand-alone or a part of a K–12 school being accredited

All indicators in **boldface** are considered critical. Indicators which are marked with an asterisk (\*) **must** be met at the “compliance” level or higher for a team visit to occur.

**4.1 Each staff member has a clear testimony of faith in Christ, has signed the school's statement of faith, and endorses the school's code of ethics/lifestyle statement.** (C)

**4.2 The executive leadership of the school ensures that staff members know and understand the ethical considerations of their respective positions.** (C)

4.3 School personnel clearly indicate their commitment to the mission and philosophy of the school and biblically-based relationships therein. (C)

**4.4 The K–12 head of school and all K–12 principals hold an ACSI administrative certificate.** (E/S)

4.4a The director of the early education program has professional training as evidenced by having obtained, at minimum,

1. a bachelor's degree in early childhood education/child development or related field from an accredited institution; or
2. a bachelor's degree in a nonrelated field and a CDA; or
3. a bachelor's degree in a nonrelated field and nine credit hours of college coursework in early childhood education/child development or related field.

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

Refer to Request for *EE Staff Waiver*, if applicable.

**4.5 All K–12 teachers hold, at minimum, a bachelor's degree from an accredited college/university or an institution recognized by ACSI.** (E/S)

4.5a Early education teachers have obtained:

- 1) an associate's degree (AA) in early childhood education/child development or related field from an accredited institution; or,
- 2) an AA degree out-of-field AND six credit hours of early childhood/child development in college coursework; or,
- 3) an AA degree out-of-field AND a CDA credential.

Refer to Request for *EE Staff Waiver*, if applicable.

Note: (A waiver replaces the *EE Equivalency Chart* and Appendix T of the *REACH 2.1 Standards Manual for Accreditation*.)

4.5b Early education teacher assistants have obtained early education college coursework above the state minimum requirements or a CDA.

Refer to Request for *EE Staff Waiver*, if applicable.

Note: (A waiver replaces the *EE Equivalency Chart* and Appendix T.)

**4.6 A minimum of 80 percent of K–12 faculty, which includes professional positions such as guidance counselors, athletic directors, library/media specialists, etc., based on full-time equivalents (FTEs), hold current ACSI certification.** (E/S)

4.7 Professional development for K–12 faculty, guidance personnel, informational resources staff, and other appropriate staff is ongoing and integral to the school and aligned with specific goals and instructional programs, and it includes training in the Christian school

philosophy of education. (E/S)

- 4.7a A minimum of four clock hours annually of biblical studies (a formal group or individual Bible study) is accepted with documentation of completion. *See EE Biblical Studies Form.* (EE)
- 4.7b A minimum of four clock hours annually of biblical studies (a formal group or individual Bible study) is accepted with documentation of completion. *See EE Biblical Studies Form.* (EE)
- 4.7c Eighty percent of all early education teachers and teacher assistants complete ACSI's *Principles and Practices of Christian Early Education* course. (EE)
- 4.8 Policies and procedures that reflect ethical employment practices regarding faculty/staff and separation from service are implemented and regularly reviewed. (C)
- 4.9 Executive leadership supports the implementation of effective instructional practices of faculty/staff through annual observation, evaluation, and goal setting to more effectively achieve desired student outcomes. (C)
- 4.9a The director ensures that a formal evaluation of new employees takes place no later than six months into the orientation period. (EE)
- 4.10 The number and preparation of instructional and support staff is sufficient for the scope of the school. (C)
- 4.11\* All personnel, including volunteers and substitute teachers, have the appropriate screening and background checks on file, and they are supervised by qualified staff. Orientation for new staff members is thorough and is conducted before any new staff have contact with the students. (See the *EE Annual Staff Training Guidelines*.)** (C)
- 4.12 Teachers and administrators work collaboratively with each other to positively affect school culture, encourage student learning, and promote organizational effectiveness. (C)
- 4.13 The program policy provides a schedule for staff that includes appropriate planning time and breaks in the work schedule. (EE)

**Brief Narrative:** In one to two pages, explain how the standard is met or what the barriers, if any, are to compliance. If the school is not found to be in compliance, what needs to occur for it to become compliant? Identify what data most relevant to mission attainment the school regularly collects in this standard area and what systems are in place to analyze the data and ensure implementation of improvement strategies. (Use your indicator ratings, documentation, and other sources to validate your explanation.)

**Strengths:** State one to three strengths that exemplify compliance in this area.

**Areas for Continuous School Improvement:** State one to three goals that reflect continuous school improvement in this area.

### Required Documentation and Supporting Evidence:

The Required Documentation must be evaluated as the school rates themselves on the indicators. Provide all required documentation and supporting evidences used by the school in rating the indicators. These will verify compliance with the standard.

### Required Documentation

- Documentation of teacher credentials, including certification, licensure, highly qualified status, baccalaureate degree, etc.
- Schedules and teaching assignments
- Handbooks for faculty and staff
- Professional development and staff orientation plans, procedures, and/or opportunities including new teacher induction
- Classroom management plan/policy
- Evaluation processes, plans, and forms for new and continuing staff
- Forms such as applications, job descriptions, etc.
- Proof of screening and background checks
- Code of ethics statement (see glossary)
- Alignment of resource allocation to educational programs and to school improvement plan requirements
- Early education yearly professional development report

### Supporting Evidence

- Trends in staff recruitment and resignation
- Level of staff preparation in specific content area of assignment including the number of teachers not teaching within their field of training or certification
- Support staff that are certified or licensed
- Level of pedagogical preparation for assigned responsibilities
- Engagement of new and veteran staff in mentoring programs
- The extent to which staff are involved in personal plans of professional development
- Engagement of all school employees in appropriate professional development
- A variety of ways in which staff are evaluated in their areas of responsibility
- Hourly staff schedule indicating appropriate breaks
- Technology training for faculty and staff
- Agendas/minutes of staff meetings
- Other

## Standard 5: Instructional Program and Resources

The instructional program consists of carefully developed, thoroughly documented, and well-executed curriculum elements that include educational philosophy, schoolwide expected student outcomes, a variety of effective instructional strategies, adequate resources, and appropriate assessments that are based on current research and quality practices. The curriculum of the school is driven by well-written policies and procedures. Core instructional areas include Bible, language arts (reading, English, literature, grammar, and writing), mathematics, science, and social studies/history. It is sufficiently funded, collaboratively reviewed on a regular basis, and compiled using the school's mission, vision, core values, and schoolwide expected student outcomes to ensure a biblical foundation for instruction. A method for assessing the effectiveness of schoolwide expected learning outcomes is in place, and the results of the assessments are communicated regularly to all stakeholders.

Informational resources exist to carry out the mission of the school by supporting the instructional program with ample and appropriate print, media, and technology resources. Qualified staff provide effective services to students, staff, and parents.

### STANDARD JUSTIFICATION Instructional Program

Just as each school needs its own philosophy statement, goals, schoolwide expected student outcomes, and mission statement, it also needs to tailor its own curriculum framework to support the accomplishment of its educational goals.

Schoolwide expected student outcomes are what the school targets for all students to know, believe, understand, prefer, and be able to do upon completion of the school's program. These schoolwide expected student outcomes are those regularly assessed by the school to help determine the school's progress in achieving its mission and are used to inform program and instructional improvement. Trends in student achievement of these goals are communicated to the school community through such means as a school profile.

ACSI defines curriculum as "the planned instructional program to be delivered to the students." It is not defined as the textbooks or other resource materials a school uses, though textbooks are one of many tools used by the school to deliver the planned instructional program. Nor is it simply defined as the box curriculum set that can be purchased for the early education level. Key to understanding curriculum is the "planned" element. Each school must identify the instructional model to follow, content to be utilized, and student outcomes to be realized—all resulting in the planned instructional program that is implemented on a daily basis. This planned instructional program must be well-documented, teacher-friendly, and goals-driven, and it must be easily revisable as needed. It should be used as more than an occasional reference tool; faculty should use it on a regular basis, indicating that this planned instructional program functions as a living, applicable document.

Additionally, all components of the instructional program—philosophy, outcomes, documentation of instruction, textbooks, and resources—must be reviewed on a planned basis, preferably in a well-defined cycle that addresses each content area. Student achievement is also regularly analyzed, and trend data of student performance from comparable schools is utilized in evaluating the school's effectiveness. The instructional protocols and procedural standards are reviewed as well.

In Christian schools, this curricular plan must not only contain academic and developmental goals but address spiritual formation goals and integration of God's Word in a natural and unforced manner. Through the instructional program and the Christian faculty that deliver it, the students develop a Christian view of God, humanity, and the world. This view should become the foundation for students' own values, goals, and lifestyle. Care must also be given to ensure that curriculum plans and implementation appropriately reflect an acknowledgment of differences in children and show God's love for people of all races, colors, ethnicities, and genders.

Effective curriculum is also sensitive to individual developmental variation, and it provides challenging experiences that lead to growth. It is designed to meet the needs of students as they matriculate to each new level of education and eventually the responsibilities of adult life. Implementation of the curriculum is tempered by awareness of the individual variation and the characteristics of the learner, particularly early learners.

Students should be well prepared for all aspects of their lives as a result of experiencing the instructional program of the Christian school. Since all truth is God's truth, teachable moments are utilized throughout the day to incorporate in a natural and an unforced way the truth that God is Creator and Lord of all content areas and disciplines. Integrating Christian truth into the curriculum is the distinctive of instruction. Christian moral and spiritual values are directly taught and are interwoven throughout each day's activities in an age-appropriate manner. Students are given the opportunity to practice responding to issues and concepts in a Christlike manner.

### Instructional Resources

As schools have moved increasingly into the world of digital delivery and the traditional school library has transformed into a media/resource center, the presentation and delivery of reading and research content has become available in a variety of access modes and in increasingly diverse formats.

ACSI defines informational resources as the print and digital resources that are accessible on-site or digitally to support the instructional program. This includes resources necessary for students to complete the research required for their class assignments, reading material for skill development or enjoyment, faculty resources, and reference or learning extension data. The resources available are balanced across the academic disciplines and grade levels of the school and students' cultural heritage.

Educational technology plays an important role as a tool for learning and instruction. Preparation for all of life includes skill development in the Christ-honoring use of technology. Quality schools and programs use technology to collect, analyze, and utilize data to enhance classroom instruction and increase student learning. Christian educators understand that technology is a tool that can be properly or improperly used.

A technology plan should be in place in the school. This plan should indicate the acquisitions that will be made and how they will be implemented for effective instruction. It is important to include a plan for training of staff and the support and maintenance of equipment.

## INDICATORS

Symbols next to indicators apply as follows:

(C)—Comprehensively applies to every level of a school being accredited (grades EE–12)

(E/S)—Applies only to K–12 schools

(EE)—Applies only to early education programs that are stand-alone or a part of a K–12 school being accredited

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All indicators in **boldface** are considered critical.

### Curriculum Guide/Mapping

**5.1 The curriculum documents developed by the school provide a well-documented biblical basis for instruction of students in each course consistent with the goal of developing a biblical worldview in students.** (C)

**5.2 The curriculum plans/maps, drive the instructional program. The plans/maps are current and include all the following components: (1) schoolwide expected student outcomes, (2) scope and sequence of instruction for each subject area at each grade level, (3) biblical integration concepts, (4) school-selected standards and, (5) assessments. The plans include course goals and objectives; resources, as well as the time allotted for each unit. The plans/maps are accessible to all faculty and inform instruction that clearly values the development of the whole child—spiritually, intellectually, physically, emotionally, and socially.** (E/S)

5.2a The program has developed a curriculum guide/plan that flows out of the philosophy and foundational statements and that is based on current early education research and principles.

The curriculum plan includes the following components: (1) an educational philosophy of teaching and how children learn based on early education research, (2) schoolwide expected student outcomes, (3) mapping of instruction for each age group, (4) incorporating overall goals and objectives aligned with state/national standards for each domain: spiritual, social, emotional, physical, cognitive, (5) developmentally appropriate instructional methods, (6) instructional resources, and (7) evaluation and assessment strategies (outlined in the *EE Evidence Guide for REACH Indicators*). (EE)

### Instructional Strategies

**5.3 Bible content and instruction are required in the core curriculum.**

*(ACSI will accept alternative and innovative ways of meeting the Bible content and instruction requirement. The school's method can be approved for meeting (or exceeding) compliance in advance of an accreditation visit by submitting a description of the process the school uses to the team chairperson and ACSI regional office. The plan must include: goals, objectives and outcomes; assessment; how it meets the spirit of the indicator and rubric.)* (E/S)

5.4 The school systematically evaluates its instructional strategies, learning activities, and instructional technology, ensuring they are research-based and reflect sound educational practice. (C)

5.5 Instructional strategies and equitable learning activities focus on active student engagement, the achievement of essential knowledge and skills, biblical wisdom and understanding, and higher-order thinking skills. (E/S)

5.5a Appropriate instructional strategies include the following developmental domains: spiritual, social, emotional, physical, and cognitive to include Bible, language, math, and science/discovery (outlined in the *EE Evidence Guide for REACH Indicators*). (EE)

5.5b Teachers incorporate appropriate instructional strategies and learning activities in the lesson plans that reflect the goals of the program and connect with the overall expected child outcomes (outlined in the *EE Evidence Guide for REACH Indicators*). (EE)

5.5c The daily schedule provides for stability, security, and flexibility to meet the group's needs, capitalizing on the children's interest and attention span. The classroom schedule includes a balance of activities that are age appropriate in length (outlined in the *EE Evidence Guide for REACH Indicators*). (EE)

### ASSESSMENT

**5.6 There is a systematic process in place for the assessment of student learning and development that includes multiple assessment measures over time to accomplish the expected student outcomes.** (C)

5.6a Developmentally appropriate child assessments such as portfolios, work samples, and observation data are collected at least twice per year and shared with parents. (EE)

**5.7 The school analyzes student performance data including 1) implications of schoolwide trends seen from year to year; 2) monitoring the progress of individual students; 3) disaggregation of data by gender, ethnicity, and other factors important to the school; and 4) comparison to outside groups. Teachers are trained in data assessment analysis for program improvement.** (C)

5.8 The school uses the analysis of data in making educationally sound decisions regarding students, instructional strategies, and programs to better attain expected student outcomes. (E/S)

5.9 The school has implemented procedures for regular communication of student achievement to all stakeholders. This communication includes the following: (1) major tests used, (2) schoolwide trends in achievement, (3) accomplishment of schoolwide expected student outcomes, and (4) annual progress of individual students. (C)

### Instructional Resources

5.10 Instructional and information resources which support teaching and learning are appropriate in number, culturally representative of the students, and include the Christian distinctives of the school. (E/S)

5.10a Developmentally appropriate instructional resource materials and equipment including child-sized tables and chairs and adequate furniture in good repair are provided in each classroom to meet the needs of the children. (EE)

5.11 Faculty members, students, and other relevant constituents provide input into the selection of instructional and information resources that support the attainment of schoolwide expected student outcomes. (C)

5.12 Information resources are readily accessible to students, staff, and faculty. Use of information resources is supported by trained staff. (C)

5.12a Passive media (television, DVDs, CDs), when used, meet the following requirements: (1) are appropriate to the age and the attention span, (2) enhance the effectiveness and values of the program, (3) are previewed by the staff for overall content and age appropriateness, (4) serve as an occasional supplement to daily activities rather than a significant part, and (5) include appropriate teacher involvement in introducing and following up the viewing with questions and activities that elicit children's active involvement. (EE)

5.12b If the program includes screen time for children, program guidelines have been developed for classroom use to ensure children's active involvement. Guidelines address strategies to ensure interactive involvement and consider the needs of the young learner. (EE)

5.13 Instructional technology competencies are incorporated into the teaching and learning process to improve the achievement of expected student outcomes. Well-integrated technology promotes creativity, collaboration, innovation, research skills, problem-solving, and digital citizenship.

#### **Policies and Procedures**

5.14 The school has a written classroom management philosophy and policies that are developmentally appropriate and biblically based, and they are implemented effectively and communicated to the school community. (E/S)

5.14a Child guidance policies and procedures are in place and published for parents and staff. The policies and procedures support staff in maintaining effective orderly classrooms (outlined in the *EE Evidence Guide*). (EE)

5.15 Written policies and procedures are in place to allocate and protect instructional time and learning opportunities and support student learning and graduation requirements. The number of students per classroom is monitored for effective learning and student-teacher relationships. (C)

5.16 The school instructs teachers and students in the ethical and moral use and evaluation of source materials, including verification, attribution and credit, appropriate referencing, and media literacy. (E/S)

5.17 The school has, and regularly evaluates, a technology plan that includes the acquisition, inventory, and maintenance of software and hardware as well as acceptable use policies. (C)

#### **Brief Narrative of the Overall Instructional Program (Part A):**

In one to two pages, explain how the standard is met or what the barriers, if any, are to compliance of the overall instructional program. If the school is not found to be in compliance, what needs to occur for it to become compliant? Identify what data most relevant to mission attainment the school regularly collects in this standard area and what systems are in place to analyze the data and ensure implementation of improvement strategies. (Use your indicator ratings, documentation, and other sources to validate your explanation.)

#### **Brief Narrative of the Instructional Program Disciplines (Part B):**

A subject area assessment for each of the following: Bible, mathematics, science, technology, language arts (including reading), social studies/history, classic and modern language, art, music, physical education, and any other area of instruction includes an assessment of strengths and weaknesses with supporting evidence and suggested improvements.

The steering committee will generally complete the introductory/overview section of each school division (if the school has divided this section into divisions or school units). Teachers, however, should be assigned to complete a section of the instructional program overview.

Schools should consider forming interdisciplinary subcommittees to promote improved understanding of objectives (including schoolwide objectives), methodologies, priorities, and perspectives between departments. Early education programs and classrooms naturally tend to implement the curricular plans in an interdisciplinary fashion (content delivery across subject areas).

Observations will verify this approach.

The school can choose to complete this subsection in a variety of ways. Typically, the faculty will address the "subjects overview" for the overall instructional program content. The school could choose to expand the subjects within each school unit, but that is not required. In the early education program, teachers will be assigned to review all curricular plans for a specific age group. In the elementary school, sections will be completed for every subject. In the junior high/middle school and high school, each department or instructional discipline will complete a section.

**EE Programs:** The early education curriculum plan/guide is most effective when presented in domains (spiritual, physical, social/emotional, and cognitive), highlighting the goals for children in these areas. Within the cognitive domain, special attention will be given to subject/content areas. The self-study will include an assessment of the strengths of the curriculum map and identified areas for improvement.

**Strengths:** State one to three strengths that exemplify compliance in this area.

**Areas for Continuous School Improvement:** State one to three goals that reflect continuous school improvement in this area.

#### **Required Documentation and Supporting Evidence:**

The Required Documentation must be evaluated as the school rates themselves on the indicators. Provide all required documentation and supporting evidences used by the school in rating the indicators. These will verify compliance with the standard.

#### **Required Documentation**

- Curriculum guides/mapping and policy and procedures for formal review and revision
- Instructional guides, including curriculum mapping and/or scope and sequence charts
- Evaluation criteria for improvement or change
- Sample/example lesson plans
- Assessment results (standardized, formative, summative, comparative, and other)
- Technology plan
- Evidence of trained personnel not included in Standard 4
- Acceptable usage policy
- Formal process for faculty input on selection of materials

- Examples of biblical integration into all areas of the instructional program
- Student engagement in the classroom and classroom strategies that encourage active involvement of students in their own learning
- Faculty use of various instructional strategies and methods to provide for a variety of learning opportunities for students
- Indications that school climate is important and is used to help guide school decisions
- Evidence of communicating student performance to all stakeholders
- Early education child guidance policies and procedures

### **Supporting Evidence**

- Instructions for alignment of lesson plans to learning expectations for students
- Agendas/minutes of grade-level and/or department meetings
- Master class schedule
- Program and/or project descriptions
- Textbooks used
- Handbooks
- Student work samples
- Classroom grading policy
- Graduation requirements, credits, GPA explanation
- Comprehensive library materials collection
- Circulation data for media materials
- Budget allocation system
- Inventory of instructional media equipment
- Steps taken within the school to link student learning to a set of standards
- Research and use of data on the effectiveness of improvement strategies
- Willingness of the school leadership to support strategies for improved instruction
- Differentiated instruction provided to students who have specific needs
- Consistency of learning and sequence across grade levels
- Continuing efforts within the school to articulate learning both horizontally and vertically
- Ways in which the school provides for the reteaching of students who have not met expectations
- Curriculum that is monitored and revised
- Students and staff have access to instructional technology
- Instructional activities have support from and interaction with information and media services
- Faculty can submit needs for educational purposes
- Circulation trends

# Standard 6: Student Care

Written policies and procedures are in place to ensure students' wellbeing—emotional, physical, spiritual, and academic. The school facilities (buildings and grounds) are appropriate in size, furnishings, and space to meet the stated philosophy, mission, and vision for the number and age of students served. The entire campus is a safe, healthy, and nurturing environment for teaching and learning. Safety procedures are documented and clearly understood, and they address the prevention and identification of abuse, bullying, and the presence of unwelcome guests. A relevant and thorough crisis management plan is in place, and the faculty and staff have been trained appropriately to handle various emergency situations. Regular drills and practices occur to assist in preparation for crisis events. Transportation guidelines for staff and students are developed, and written policies and procedures are in place.

## STANDARD JUSTIFICATION

### Crisis Planning

Crisis planning is essential to ensure that a safe and nurturing environment is provided for the students, faculty, and staff. School preparedness for potential threats to the environment, natural disasters, and emergency situations must be documented via a well-developed plan that outlines the steps to be taken in the event of a crisis. Evidence of scheduled training and education of all involved is provided and inclusive of evacuation plans, testing and drill exercises, parent notification procedures, and compliance with local, state, federal, or provincial regulations. This plan must be updated regularly to be effective for the current status of the school.

### Safety and Health

The health, safety, and welfare of all students has priority as a part of the overall school programming. Consistent enforcement of policies and procedures that promote and ensure compliance with health regulations is imperative. Documentation of faculty and staff training in first aid and CPR, guidelines for the storage and distribution of medication, special medical needs, food allergies, and protocol on handling of communicable diseases and bloodborne pathogens must be evident. There is ongoing documented review of policy and education of faculty in identification of signs and symptoms of possible child abuse or neglect and their role as mandatory reporters. Education of the school population in harassment, intimidation, and bullying (HIB) laws creates a culture that values each child. Pests and pesticides are handled as governing authorities dictate.

### Food/Nutrition Services

Food and nutrition services are a component of school programming. Guidelines regarding the type of services provided must be outlined with attention to foodborne allergies. Compliance with governmental standards for the preparation, handling, storage, and delivery of food is required. Personnel guidelines are posted. Dining facilities must be hygienic and appropriate for the size of the school population and provide a positive atmosphere for peer and staff interactions.

### Facilities

The facilities enhance the academic program and foster a positive reputation within the community. Safety and campus security are emphasized. Written documentation validates regular inspection and maintenance. Traffic flow patterns, playgrounds, and buildings are designed in a manner that allows for safe usage by staff and students. The master site plan outlines optimal usage of buildings and grounds for parking, play, and recreation while detailing plans for future expansion. Good stewardship and excellent maintenance of facilities honor God's provision.

### Environment

The indoor and outdoor spaces communicate a sense of order, and they are aesthetically pleasing. The environment is clearly designed for the comfort and engagement of children. Space allocations are sufficient and appropriate. As possible, provisions are made to accommodate those who have exceptional physical needs.

### Transportation

Safe and effective transport of students to and from school-related activities is a priority. Regular maintenance and inspection of vehicles complies with applicable regulations. Proof of insurance and an appropriate driver's license are documented for all drivers. Policies, procedures, and guidelines outlining behavior standards for students are communicated and rehearsed.

## INDICATORS

Symbols next to indicators apply as follows:

(C)—Comprehensively applies to every level of a school being accredited (grades EE–12)

(E/S)—Applies only to K–12 schools

(EE)—Applies only to early education programs that are stand-alone or a part of a K–12 school being accredited

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All indicators in **boldface** are considered critical. Indicators which are marked with an asterisk (\*) **must** be met at the "compliance" level or higher for a team visit to occur.

### Crisis Planning

**6.1\* A comprehensive written security and crisis management plan has been developed, regularly reviewed, and implemented, and it is supported by appropriate training for all staff and students.** (C)

6.2 The school communicates with legal authorities (i.e., the fire department, police department, and other applicable agencies), parents, media, and community members when a crisis or a major incident occurs. (C)

### Safety and Health

6.3 The school complies with applicable local, state, and federal laws regarding safety and health issues. (C)

6.3a The program does not offer foods that present a risk of choking to children. Food is cut into small pieces no larger than a one-fourth-inch square for infants and a one-half-inch square for toddlers. A written policy is communicated to all staff and parents. (EE)

6.4 Students are in compliance with the requirements of civil authorities regarding immunizations, physical examinations, and communicable diseases. Records of health services rendered to students (including accidents and injuries) are appropriately noted and filed. (C)

**6.5 Written policies and procedures for all areas of health and safety services have been developed, reviewed, and implemented.** (C)

6.5a The program has specific written policies that guide the consistent implementation of a wellness and illness management plan as well as staff training in their responsibilities (outlined in the *EE Evidence Guide for REACH Indicators*). (EE)

6.5b The program has an established plan for sanitizing toys and equipment regularly. Toys that have been contaminated by saliva or other body secretions are washed and sanitized before they are used by another child. (EE)

**6.6 Biblically based plans and procedures are developed that educate the school community regarding harassment, intimidation, and bullying.** (C)

**6.7\* The school provides training for staff and complies with its legal reporting responsibilities in cases of alleged child abuse, neglect, or other areas in which reporting is mandated.** (C)

**Food/Nutrition Services**

6.8 The school complies with local, state, and federal regulations regarding preparation, delivery, handling, and storage of food. (C)

6.9 The school provides a suitable and hygienic eating space for the staff and students. (C)

6.10 Nutritional standards for meals and snacks have been established. (C)

6.10a The nutritional needs of children are met and supported by the staff and facilities (outlined in the *EE Evidence Guide for REACH Indicators*). (EE)

**Facilities, Environment, and Transportation**

**6.11\* Required local, state, provincial, and federal legal standards for fire protection, sanitation, and transportation are met.** (C)

6.12 The school maintains the site, facilities, services, and equipment to provide an environment that is safe, secure, and orderly. (C)

**6.13 The facilities are secure and suitable for the size of the school; the school environment is monitored and maintained to ensure it is conducive to the instruction and development of the whole child.** (C)

6.13a The program provides an ongoing maintenance plan that ensures the health and safety of the children (outlined in the *EE Evidence Guide for REACH Indicators*). (EE)

6.13b Sinks and toilets are readily accessible to children. (EE)

6.14 The recreation area/playground, common areas, and athletic areas are safe, age appropriate, and large enough for the number of students. (E/S)

6.14a The early education playground supports the developmental growth of children within a context of safety (outlined in the *EE Evidence Guide for REACH Indicators*). (EE)

6.15 A written facilities plan is in place to address future programs; enrollment changes; staff, facility, and technology needs; as well as future capital improvements. (C)

6.16 Vehicles and drivers used to transport students for all school activities follow the school's policies as well as government and insurance regulations. (C)

6.17 Adequate liability, vehicle, and property insurance are in place. (C)

6.18 Written policies and procedures are in place for routine safety inspections, service, and repair of school-owned vehicles and for reporting vehicle accidents—including communication with all constituents. (C)

6.19 Infants and Toddlers: Appropriate health, safety, and supervision practices ensure the specific needs of infants and toddlers are met (outlined in the *EE Evidence Guide for REACH Indicators*). (EE)

**Brief Narrative:** In one to two pages, explain how the standard is met or what the barriers, if any, are to compliance. If the school is not found to be in compliance, what needs to occur for it to become compliant? Identify what data most relevant to mission attainment the school regularly collects in this standard area and what systems are in place to analyze the data and ensure implementation of improvement strategies. (Use your indicator ratings, documentation, and other sources to validate your explanation.)

**Strengths:** State one to three strengths that exemplify compliance in this area.

**Areas for Continuous School Improvement:**

State one to three goals that reflect continuous school improvement in this area.

**Required Documentation and Supporting Evidence:**

The Required Documentation must be evaluated as the school rates themselves on the indicators. Provide all required documentation and supporting evidences used by the school in rating the indicators. These will verify compliance with the standard.

**Required Documentation**

- Crisis management and emergency plan
- Building evacuation plan displayed in classrooms, offices, and other rooms used by students
- Food services guidelines and inspection reports, if applicable
- Schedules and documentation of required drills (e.g., fire or earthquake)
- Health policies, procedures, and guidelines (including medicine distribution and storage)
- Student and faculty health files
- Documentation of known allergies
- Documentation showing compliance with local, state, federal, or provincial regulations, when appropriate
- Reporting procedures and policies for child abuse/neglect/bullying prevention
- Written process describing how facilities are regularly inspected and maintained and data demonstrating the quality of these processes
- Long-range facility plans (including plans for continual updating of facilities)
- Transportation policy/plan
- Documentation showing compliance with all local, state, federal, or provincial regulations, when appropriate

- Master site/security plan
- Crisis plans notification procedures
- Parent notification procedures

### **Supporting Evidence**

- Regular updates to evacuation and crisis management plans
- Guidelines posted in appropriate places for food services
- Sample health forms and immunization records
- Copies of CPR and first aid certification
- Field trip policies, procedures, forms
- Copies of recent menus for meals/snacks
- Student emergency profile forms (follows the students for activities)
- Indication that facilities and vehicles are regularly inspected and maintained
- Indications of a safe and orderly environment
- Vehicular flow and traffic safety
- Surveys
- Budget allocation for maintenance and facility development
- Environmental studies
- Building and/or transportation usage forms
- Evidence of insurance, if appropriate
- Any other documentation to verify compliance with this standard
- Policy for appropriately sized food for infants and toddlers
- Policy for wellness and illness management plan

# Standard 7: Character, Values, and Spiritual Formation of Students

The school shall provide for spiritual nurture and discipleship of its students with the goal of developing a biblical worldview. Spiritual nurturing of Christlike character is planned, intentional, and systematic in implementation. Mentoring and discipleship experiences are necessary components in a spiritual formation strategy. Students are given opportunities to serve others and develop a Christlike attitude toward the poor, needy, and vulnerable. A commitment to a community of faith is modeled by the faculty and emphasized to all students. Spiritual formation assessment is integral to effective and ongoing improvement of the school program.

## STANDARD JUSTIFICATION

The distinctive nature of a Christian school is that it seeks to produce rational, reasoned, and responsible Christian citizens—rational in that it is shaping its students to be spiritually formed thinkers, reasoned in that Christian schooling trains pupils for the thoughtful use of a biblical worldview, responsible because it deliberately educates students for Christian living.

The educational process is holistic in that it addresses the development of mind, body, and spirit. Spiritual principles, then, are not presented in isolation; they become embedded into daily routines and activities. Truths are presented, taught, and modeled in ways appropriate to the developmental level of the students. Schoolwide expected student outcomes include strong character, evidence of values consistent with a person of faith, and a God-centered pattern of life.

Christian schools should not be teaching students to withdraw from the world but to love God with all their heart, mind, and soul (Matthew 22:37); demonstrate growth in wisdom and stature (Luke 2:52); demonstrate the ability to live in the world as salt and light (Matthew 5:13–14); and demonstrate the sacrificial giving of themselves and their resources to reflect the essence and love of Christ who lives and dwells with them (Romans 12:1).

Measurement of students' growth in spiritual formation and attainment of schoolwide expected student outcomes in the spiritual/affective domain is an integral component of the school's assessment strategy in order to identify trends in the student body for program improvement.

## INDICATORS

Symbols next to indicators apply as follows:

(C)—Comprehensively applies to every level of a school being accredited (grades EE–12)

(E/S)—Applies only to K–12 schools

(EE)—Applies only to early education programs that are stand-alone or a part of a K–12 school being accredited

All indicators in **boldface** are considered critical.

**7.1 Schoolwide expected student outcomes include character development, acquisition of Christian values, and spiritual formation.** (C)

7.2 Christlike respect, compassion, and caring for self and all others is taught and demonstrated by school personnel. (C)

7.3 Mentoring and discipleship experiences focus on spiritual formation, character development, and the instilling of Christian values. (E/S)

7.4 **Constituent interactions reflect the attitude of Christ.**

**Communication between constituents demonstrates sensitivity and responsiveness to the individual needs, interests, and temperaments of the students.** (C)

7.5 All aspects of the school and its instructional program reflect developmentally appropriate application of a biblical worldview and Christlike character and values. (C)

7.6 Age-appropriate opportunities for service and missions, including compassionate outreach to the poor, needy, or vulnerable, are provided as a means of spiritual growth and formation. (C)

7.7 Active participation in a local Christian church community is required of the faculty and emphasized within the school's philosophy and goals. (C)

7.8 Assessment of the spiritual development of students is intentionally included in the ongoing evaluation of the school's effectiveness in formally measuring its schoolwide expected student outcomes. (E/S)

**Brief Narrative:** In one to two pages, explain how the standard is met or what the barriers, if any, are to compliance. If the school is not found to be in compliance, what needs to occur for it to become compliant? Identify what data most relevant to mission attainment the school regularly collects in this standard area and what systems are in place to analyze the data and ensure implementation of improvement strategies. (Use your indicator ratings, documentation, and other sources to validate your explanation.)

**Strengths:** State one to three strengths that exemplify compliance in this area.

**Areas for Continuous School Improvement:** State one to three goals that reflect continuous school improvement in this area.

**Required Documentation and Supporting Evidence:**

The Required Documentation must be evaluated as the school rates themselves on the indicators. Provide all required documentation and supporting evidences used by the school in rating the indicators. These will verify compliance with the standard.

**Required Documentation**

- Schoolwide expected student outcomes
- Handbooks
- Guidelines and policies related to spiritual assessment
- Mentoring and discipleship activities

**Supporting Evidence**

- Chapel schedules
- Community service schedules
- Surveys
- Publications
- Student feedback
- Parent and community feedback
- Community outreaches
- Classroom observations and records of students' questions and conversations about spiritual matters

# Standard 8: Continuous School Improvement Plan

The school must, with appropriate stakeholder input, systematically develop and annually update a continuous school improvement plan (CSIP). The plan, based on the school's philosophy, mission, vision, core values, and schoolwide expected student outcomes, includes specific goals, as well as action items. The process is driven by data collection and analysis. This plan must have significant focus on how it will promote organizational growth and high achievement of schoolwide expected student outcomes. The CSIP reflects a pervasive culture of ongoing improvement and accountability.

## STANDARD JUSTIFICATION

The CSIP may include areas where the school is pursuing its vision, developing innovative and creative ideas, pursuing academic and faith development, and establishing new strategies for growth and development. The major recommendations from the team report must be included in the revised CSIP. The head of school is ultimately responsible for the ongoing updating of the CSIP.

## INDICATORS

Symbols next to indicators apply as follows:

**(C)**—Comprehensively applies to every level of a school being accredited (grades EE–12)

**(E/S)**—Applies only to K–12 schools

**(EE)**—Applies only to early education programs that are stand-alone or a part of a K–12 school being accredited

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All indicators in boldface are considered critical.

**8.1 The ongoing planning process is collaborative, and it includes opportunities for input from all stakeholders.** (C)

8.2 The CSIP reflects the attainment of schoolwide academic and non-academic expected student outcomes and school effectiveness. (C)

8.3 The planning process is organizationally comprehensive and establishes goals and priorities for development. (C)

8.4 The school improvement plan is developed by utilizing a variety of organizational, achievement, and survey data and input from stakeholders. The plan is viewed as a strategy for strengthening mission effectiveness and vision accomplishment. (C)

8.5 Each action item in the improvement plan addresses the fiscal, personnel, resources, and time implications for implementation. (C)

8.6 The school evaluates and documents the effectiveness and impact of its improvement plan and regularly communicates the results to all stakeholders. (C)

For each action plan section, include:

- **Statement of area for improvement (goal)**
- **Time frame**
- **Specific action steps to achieve the goal**
- **Person responsible for the action**
- **Resources needed**
- **Action due date**
- **Evidence of progress**
- **Communication to constituents**
- **Expected schoolwide learning results this improvement addresses**

A school may create a document, chart, or spreadsheet with the components listed above or they may use the template provided by ACSI. The school's CSIP is required to be attached as documentation to Standard 8.

## Required Documentation

- Attach current CSIP to Self-Study
- School profile
- A plan that includes components that provide specific goals, a set of appropriate assessments, a set of interventions expected to cause student growth to occur, and a plan for ensuring that the staff have the skills to implement the plan
- A continuous review process to ensure ongoing monitoring and adjustment of the improvement plan
- Student performance and achievement data

## Supporting Evidence

- The degree to which staff have analyzed student results in the context of school improvement plan interventions and programs
- A broad range of involvement by constituency in the design of the school improvement plan
- Alignment of the school improvement goals with needs identified in the profile and supported by data analysis
- Professional development activities that are aligned with and a part of the school improvement plan
- A variety of baseline and interval data to describe progress toward the goals
- The extent to which the improvement agenda has been widely discussed among constituents
- Various communication techniques used to inform constituency regarding school improvement efforts and successes
- A rigorous data-analysis process to evaluate the degree of success in goal attainment
- A school improvement plan that focuses on increased student achievement
- Agendas/minutes of meetings regarding school improvement activities and results
- Communications to constituency regarding school improvement activities and results
- Success demonstrated in reaching goals of the school improvement plan

The following appendixes were developed to provide schools with more clarity and direction as they progress in their self-study and begin the accreditation process. Please note that there are additional resources and tools made available at the ACSI website (<https://www.acsi.org/school-services/accreditation/ee-12/school-accreditation-documents>).

## Appendix A: ACSI Mission and Vision Statements

### ACSI MISSION STATEMENT

ACSI exists to strengthen Christian schools and equip Christian educators worldwide as they prepare students academically and inspire them to become devoted followers of Jesus Christ.

### ACSI VISION STATEMENT

ACSI will become a leading international organization that promotes Christian education and provides training and resources to Christian schools and Christian educators, resulting in

- schools that contribute to the public good through effective teaching and learning and that are biblically sound, academically rigorous, socially engaged, and culturally relevant and
- educators who embody a biblical worldview, engage in transformational teaching and discipling, and embrace personal and professional growth.

# Appendix B: Critical Indicators

All of the standards in *REACH 2.1* should be met at an acceptable level for a school to be identified as “accredited.” In support of this acceptable level, the following indicators are critical to meeting the standards of ACSI accreditation.

## INDICATORS

Symbols next to indicators apply as follows:

**(C)**—Comprehensively applies to every level of a school being accredited (grades EE–12)

**(E/S)**—Applies only to K–12 schools

**(EE)**—Applies only to early education programs that are stand-alone or a part of a K–12 school being accredited

Indicators which are marked with an asterisk (\*) **must** be met at the “compliance” level or higher for a team visit to occur.

### 1.0 PHILOSOPHY AND FOUNDATIONS

- 1.1 The statement of faith and the philosophy, mission, vision, core values, and schoolwide expected student outcome statements of the school are established and are reviewed regularly and systematically in a collaborative manner. (C)
- 1.3 The foundational documents are consistently applied as integrative, coordinating, and examining devices throughout all aspects of the programs, operations, and curriculum. (C)

### 2.0 GOVERNANCE AND EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP

- 2.2 The governance and executive leadership team of the school reflects a clear Christ-centered governance and executive leadership model. A policy is in place that requires a testimony and evidence of faith in Jesus Christ from all board members and executive leadership. (C)
- 2.5 Established written policies and procedures promote effective operations in admissions, governance, finance, and other operational aspects. Appropriate legal documents and clearly articulated articles of incorporation, governing body policies, and bylaws are established and are available for review. (C)
- 2.6 Established written policies are in place to see that the educational and developmental needs of each admitted student are being met on the basis of biblical principles, professional ethics, and high standards. Staff members are sensitive to the culture, gender, language, and special needs of students and their families. (C)
- 2.7 Financial resources are available to fulfill the mission and programs of the school, and financial operations and decisions are conducted with integrity and in accordance with biblical principles. Income received from tuition is appropriately used for education-related expenses within the school. (C)
- 2.9 A review of the school’s finances is conducted by an external CPA who has no vested interest in the school at the time of initial accreditation and renewal. The annual statement of financial practices is submitted with the annual accreditation report. (See *Options for Meeting Indicator 2.9* for details.) (C)
- 2.11\* The school ensures compliance with applicable local, state, and federal laws, and it is in good standing with all regulatory agencies. (C)

### 3.0 HOME AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS AND STUDENT SERVICES

- 3.1 Enrollment is sufficient to establish the viability of the school and all school divisions it offers (i.e., EE, primary, elementary, secondary). (C)
- 3.7\* The nondiscrimination statement is published and evident in the actions, relationships, and programs of the school. (C)
- 3.11 Confidential records of students are complete, organized, current, accessible only to appropriate personnel, compliant with applicable legal requirements, and kept in a safe location. (C)
- 3.15 Staff members intentionally prepare and maintain an emotionally healthy environment (outlined in the *EE Evidence Guide for REACH Indicators*). (EE)

### 4.0 PERSONNEL

- 4.1 Each staff member has a clear testimony of faith in Christ, has signed the school’s statement of faith, and endorses the school’s code of ethics/lifestyle statement. (C)
- 4.2 The executive leadership of the school ensures staff members know and understand the ethical considerations of their respective positions. (C)
- 4.4 The K–12 head of school and all K–12 principals hold an ACSI administrative certificate. (E/S)
- 4.5 All K–12 teachers hold, at minimum, a bachelor’s degree from an accredited college/university or an institution recognized by ACSI. (E/S)
- 4.6 A minimum of 80 percent of K–12 faculty, which includes professional positions such as guidance counselors, athletic directors, library/media specialists, etc., based on full-time equivalents (FTEs), hold current ACSI certification. (E/S)
- 4.11\* All personnel, including volunteers and substitute teachers, have the appropriate screening and background checks on file, and they are supervised by qualified staff. Orientation for new staff members is thorough and is conducted before any new staff have contact with the students. (See the *EE Annual Staff Training Guidelines*.) (C)

### 5.0 INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM AND RESOURCES

- 5.1 The curriculum documents developed by the school provide a well-documented biblical basis for instruction of students in each course consistent with the goal of developing a biblical worldview in students. (C)
- 5.2 The curriculum plans/maps drive the instructional program. The plans/ maps are current and include the following components: (1) schoolwide expected student outcomes, (2) scope and sequence of instruction for each subject area at each grade level, (3) biblical integration concepts, (4) school-selected standards, and (5) assessments. The plans include course goals and objectives; resources, as well as the time allotted for each unit. The plans/maps are accessible to all faculty and inform instruction that clearly values the development of the whole child—spiritually, intellectually, physically, emotionally, and socially. (E/S)

- 5.3 Bible content and instruction are required in the core curriculum. (E/S)
- 5.6 There is a systematic process in place for the assessment of student learning and development that includes multiple assessment measures over time to accomplish the expected student outcomes. (C)
- 5.7 The school analyzes student performance data including 1) implications of schoolwide trends seen from year to year; 2) monitoring the progress of individual students; 3) disaggregation of data by gender, ethnicity, and other factors important to the school; and 4) comparison to outside groups. Teachers are trained in data assessment and analysis for program improvement. (E/S)

## **6.0 STUDENT CARE**

- 6.1\* A comprehensive written security and crisis management plan has been developed, regularly reviewed, and implemented, and it is supported by appropriate training for all staff and students. (C)
- 6.5 Written policies and procedures for all areas of health and safety services have been developed, reviewed, and implemented. (C)
- 6.6 Biblically based plans and procedures are developed that educate the school community regarding harassment, intimidation, and bullying. (C)
- 6.7\* The school provides training for staff and complies with its legal reporting responsibilities in cases of alleged child abuse, neglect, or other areas in which reporting is mandated. (C)
- 6.11\* Required local, state, provincial, and federal legal standards for fire protection, sanitation, and transportation are met. (C)
- 6.13 The facilities are secure and suitable for the size of the school; the school environment is monitored and well maintained to ensure it is conducive to the instruction and development of the whole child. (C)

## **7.0 CHARACTER, VALUES, AND SPIRITUAL FORMATION OF STUDENTS**

- 7.1 Schoolwide expected student outcomes include character development, acquisition of Christian values, and spiritual formation. (C)
- 7.4 Constituent interactions reflect the attitude of Christ. Communication between constituents demonstrates sensitivity and responsiveness to the individual needs, interests, and temperaments of the students. (C)

## **8.0 CONTINUOUS SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

- 8.1 The ongoing planning process is collaborative, and it includes opportunities for input from all stakeholders. (C)