Memo:
To: AACS Accredited Schools
Re: Teacher Certification and Accreditation

October 29, 2010

Dear AACS School Administrator:

The AACS Accreditation Commission is in the process of reviewing and revising the accreditation and teacher certification processes. The changes will be significant and are being carefully evaluated and thoughtfully discussed. Our primary goal is to make the process more flexible and “user friendly” without compromising credibility or the motivation for excellence in Christian education. The review and revision process will likely require about two years to complete, but some revisions to the certification process and the way it interfaces with accreditation are nearly complete. We have waited until now to send your AACS Accredited School Annual Report because we wanted to incorporate the new requirements in this report and get some information from you that will assist us in establishing some percentages that will become part of the rubrics used to measure the degree to which standards are met by schools desiring AACS accreditation.

In a very brief summary, the current process of providing some flexibility in the certification requirement by allowing paraprofessional and temporary certificates while requiring 100% teacher certification will be replaced. The new mechanism for flexibility will eliminate the paraprofessional and temporary categories of certification and will require that 80% of teaching staff, measured by FTE, be AACS certified (provisional, professional, or advanced professional). FTE is Full-Time Equivalency. It is a measure of the hours taught as a fraction of the hours in a school week.

The generally accepted standard for teacher preparation requires a minimum of a bachelor’s degree and uses a certification process as a means of documenting appropriate preparation. The Academic Preparation Proposal document shows the language the AACS Accreditation Commission has approved for inclusion in the revised Accreditation Manual related to teacher preparation (Standards 4.4.2a and 4.4.2b). It also shows the rubric that will be used to measure the degree to which the standard is being met. The percentages proposed for standard 4.4.2a may yet be revised (20% of core classes or 30% of non-core classes), based partly on the information we receive from you in your annual report. You will also see that the annual report has been revised to collect information regarding teacher certification in line with the revised standards.

The AACS Certification Proposal document shows the approved draft of the teacher certification chart. You will note that the chart no longer includes the paraprofessional and temporary categories. Flexibility will instead be included by requiring that 80% of teaching staff, measured by FTE, are AACS-
certified. You will also note that the requirement for certificate renewal will change to 4 SH/6 CEU’s (previously 6 SH/9CEU’s). These changes have already been approved by the Commission and will be reflected in revised certification documents before January 1.

Please call me if you have any questions. The review and revision is a work in progress. We believe that you will find the changes increase flexibility for you while maintaining an appropriate emphasis on professionalism and academic preparation for your teachers. I’ll be happy to discuss any of this with you and will welcome your feedback.

Sincerely,

Jeff Walton
AACS Executive Director