4   STANDARDS FOR ACCREDITATION

The twelve standards in this document describe practices and procedures that exist in quality Christian schools. They are based on research, best practices, and accreditation traditions. They describe schools that are striving for spiritual and academic excellence.

Each standard is followed by a set of indicators. The indicators are descriptions of exemplary practices and processes that will be evident in educational programs that effectively meet the standard. Schools will meet most but not necessarily all indicators. Indicators amplify the standard and show possible ways that a school or evaluator can demonstrate that a standard is being met. Schools are encouraged to expand upon the indicators to emphasize unique characteristics of the school.

Note for Self-Study: Following each standard in the self-study is a narrative report from the school and a set of strengths and weaknesses. The decision of the accreditation team and Commission to accredit a school will depend partly on the school's recognition of weaknesses and its strategies for improvement.

(R)—Indicates that the self-study guide includes a rubric for assessing the degree to which the school meets this indicator.

(1NA)—For schools doing their first self-study for accreditation, a few indicators do not yet apply. Those are marked 1NA at the end of the indicator.

1. PHILOSOPHY AND MISSION

The school has clearly written and actively implemented a statement of faith and a philosophy of Christian education. The foundation and the framework of these statements is the Bible, and references to Scriptures thoroughly support the school's statements. The Christian philosophy permeates every aspect of the school program. A precisely written mission statement captures the purposes of the school and guides decision making and planning. Other foundational statements complement and extend the philosophy and mission statements. School leaders thoughtfully evaluate the degree to which the school is accomplishing its mission and correct course when needed to better accomplish core purposes.

1.1   The school publishes a statement of faith that is in agreement with the AACS statement of faith. Personnel affirm and support the statement of faith. Curriculum choices are in harmony with the statement of faith.

1.2   The school's Christian identity is clearly articulated in a Christian education philosophy statement. (R) *Indicates that the self-study guide includes a rubric for assessing the degree to which the school meets this indicator.*

1.3   The school's Christian identity is clearly articulated in the mission statement. (R)

1.4   The school takes steps to ensure that students and their families understand and support the school's philosophy and mission. (R)

1.5   The school's philosophy and mission are communicated in publications and manuals and on the school's website.

1.6   Additional foundational statements, if used, complement and extend the philosophy and mission statements. Additional statements might include broad goal statements that describe expected student outcomes, a vision statement, or a statement of core values.

1.7   Curriculum and instruction reflect the school's mission and philosophy.

1.8   The school visibly promotes its Christian identity with symbols and displays that are part of publications and the physical environment of the school.

1.9   Foundational statements (philosophy, mission, and others) are periodically reviewed and affirmed or revised by school leadership.

1.10   The school implements measures to assess its effectiveness in fulfilling its mission and can document changes made to better accomplish core purposes. (R)

2. Governance and Leadership

The school meets legal requirements for operation. The group or individuals charged with overseeing the direction of the school (governance) ensure the integrity, effectiveness, and reputation of the school. The governance establishes policy, provides resources, and assures a quality educational program. The head of the school and others in administrative positions (leadership) work together with the governance in an atmosphere of mutual respect to promote the interests of students and learning. School leaders foster and protect a productive environment for teaching and learning. Leadership promotes development of both students and staff. Leadership demonstrates both facility for day-to-day operations and vision for long-term planning.

Governance

(Governance refers to the group or individuals charged with overseeing the direction of the school and fulfilling the legal obligations of governance: may be an organization, governing body, board of trustees, board of education, or some other configuration.)

2.1 The governance of the school ensures that the school operates legally (complying with applicable local, state, and federal laws) as required by its status as either a church ministry or an independent school.

2.2 The governance ensures that the documents required for legal operation are secured and maintained. Required documents include a constitution, by-laws, published non-discriminatory admissions policy, and IRS Form 5578. Articles establishing incorporated status and tax-exempt status are also required for schools that are not ministries of churches. All documents that define and establish the corporate status of the school are on-site and readily available.

2.3 The role of the governance and the procedures for adopting policies are clearly defined.

2.4 The governance fulfills its duty and responsibilities in relation to legal obligations, major policy oversight, and financial oversight. (R)

2.5 Criteria for hiring the school's leadership include an assessment of the candidate's understanding of and commitment to the doctrinal statement, philosophy, and mission of the school.

2.6 Governance refrains from undermining the authority of the leadership to conduct the daily operations of the school. Governance and leadership work cooperatively to promote the health of the school and the success of students and teachers.

Leadership

2.7 The school has an organizational structure that clearly defines lines of authority.

2.8 The administrative and faculty turnover is not excessive.

2.9 The school has an effective administrative organization for carrying out the program of the school and the policies established by the governance. The school has an adequate number of administrative personnel who are qualified by training and experience in the field of administration. (R)

2.10 The administrative head of the school is accountable to the governance and is responsible for ensuring expected levels of student performance.

2.11 Leadership articulates and models the Christian principles of the school. Leadership demonstrates that maintaining the Christian identity of the school is a top priority.

2.12 Leadership promotes a respectful and supportive environment that encourages the spiritual development of students and staff.

2.13 Leadership accepts and supports the authority of the sponsoring church and church leadership (if the school is a church ministry).

2.14 Leadership ensures that all school programs and activities are adequately planned and supervised.

2.15   The school defines administrative policies and procedures in a document or manual (administrative manual or policy manual) that is regularly reviewed, updated as needed, and followed in administrative practice.

2.16   Leadership ensures that the school abides by legal and ethical business and educational practices.

2.17   There is a sufficient number of trained and qualified staff to perform various office functions. (R)

3. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLANNING

Although the school's school improvement plan (SIP) is not submitted until the first annual report following a team visit, the report for Standard 3 must be completed as part of the self-study. Most of the indicators apply to the self-study process and not to the SIP document. Note that collecting data/information is the foundational component of school improvement, so every reference to "improvement plans" includes the process of collecting data/information, the self-study process. **For schools doing their first self-study for accreditation, a few indicators do not yet apply. Those are marked 1NA at the end of the indicator.**

The school has established an on-going school improvement program based on data derived from an in-depth profiling of the school. The school improvement program addresses the school's biblical beliefs, mission, student expectations, curriculum and instructional strategies, performance assessment, and strategic initiatives. The five-year school improvement plan (SIP) focuses on weaknesses, challenges, and concerns identified in the profiling process. The planning process is collaborative. Planning focuses on continuous improvement of student performance, staff professional growth, organizational growth, and the degree to which the mission of the school are accomplished.

If the self-study process is approached with appropriate diligence and candor, the information collected will create an accurate profile of the school. The narrative portions of the self-study together with the strengths and weaknesses identified comprise the profile. The self-study documentation provides the data that validates the narrative for the self-study and provides the data that supports school improvement planning. Areas of need identified in the self-study process, together with major recommendations made by the accreditation team are addressed in strategic initiatives that direct the school's improvement efforts for a five-year period.

Note that completion of the initial school improvement plan (SIP) document is accomplished after the team visit for initial AACS accreditation. The SIP document is to be submitted with the first annual report following accreditation. Continuous review and updating of the SIP is expected. Note also that documentation and data collection is an integral part of the school improvement planning.

3.1   The school's improvement plans are developed with broad participation from the school community (church leadership, staff, families, students, alumni, and other stakeholders).

3.2   Information about the school's planning processes, improvement plans, and results are communicated to the school community.

3.3   Improvement plans are supported by the school community and approved by school governance where appropriate. (1NA) *** For schools doing their first self-study for accreditation, a few indicators do not yet apply. Those are marked 1NA at the end of the indicator.***

3.4   Data supports conclusions about the degree to which the school mission is being accomplished.

3.5   Data supports conclusions about student performance. Strategic initiatives include quantifiable measures for assessing improvements in performance.

3.6   Mechanisms for collecting information from faculty, families, students, alumni, and others in the school community are used in the profiling process (the self-study process). Mechanisms might include surveys, interviews, focus groups, and SWOT analysis or other feedback tools.

3.7   Data support both the areas targeted for improvement and assessments of success following implementation of strategic initiatives.

3.8   Improvement plans are reviewed and updated periodically. The degree to which outcomes meet expectations is assessed and plans are revised as needed.

3.9   The process of collecting data, evaluating, and planning for school improvement is ongoing.

3.10   Planners realistically consider the capacities of facilities, equipment, staff and other resources before adopting new programs or launching new initiatives.

3.11   The school moves to correct any recommendations made by the accreditation team in a timely manner. (1NA)

3.12   All school records, operations, and facilities are open to evaluation, assessment, and review by the accreditation team. (1NA)

3.13   The administration allocates all resources necessary to maintain an on-going improvement process.

3.14   The SIP includes initiatives for continuous improvement of significant components of school success such as student performance, staff professional growth, organizational growth, and facilities improvements. School-developed initiatives must address at least one of these three: (1) creating and/or implementing a coherent curriculum, (2) promoting authentic literacy (reading, writing, and speaking effectively), or (3) developing soundly structured instruction. (1NA)

4. FINANCES

Financial resources are sufficient to provide the educational opportunities defined by the school's mission. Procedures for managing finances are ethical and protect both the resources of the school and the integrity of those who manage school funds. Financial practices promote confidence in the school's ability to manage resources responsibly and follow established budgeting and accounting principles.

4.1   The financial resources of the school are adequate to meet the expenses. The school demonstrates a good testimony among the businesses that deal with the school.

4.2   Proper financial records are kept and reviewed regularly and systematically. Annual financial statements for the last three years are provided for accreditation team review.

4.3   Financial records are protected against loss by fire and theft and are available only to authorized persons.

4.4   The budget is realistic and is adequate to meet the school's stated objectives. There is adequate participation by appropriate staff in preparing the budget and presenting it for approval. Procedures are in place for periodic budget adjustments. Annual budgets for the last three years are provided for accreditation team review.

4.5   Finances are currently stable and projections indicate continuing stability.

4.6   The school has sufficient insurance coverage for property, liability, and vehicles. The school is in compliance with all federal and state laws relating to employee insurance requirements (including workman's compensation and unemployment insurance).

4.7   The school publishes a tuition and fee schedule as well as a refund policy. This information is well communicated to parents and interested parties and meets legal and ethical considerations.

4.8   The leadership has a clear understanding of the school's long- and short-term needs and has developed plans to meet those needs.

4.9   A financial audit or review, conducted by a qualified person who is not employed by the school (or sponsoring church), is conducted at least once in every accreditation cycle. A school must receive an *exemplary* rating on this indicator to receive an *exemplary* rating for this standard. A school must receive at least an *emerging* rating on this indicator to receive an *effective* rating for this standard. A school must receive an *exemplary* rating on this indicator to be considered for "Accredited with Distinction" status. Note that auditors conduct compilations, reviews, and audits. Either an audit or a review can meet the definition of *review* for this indicator. A compilation is not sufficient to meet the definition of *review.* (R)

4.10   Fundraising activities are approved by the administration. Proceeds are normally used for student activities or special projects and are not intended for general fund use. The school maintains careful records for all fundraising and capital development activities and stipulates that all such activities are conducted in a legal, ethical, and professional manner.

4.11   Written financial procedures ensure the protection of resources and protect the integrity of those who handle school funds. Procedures are approved by governance. Procedures are rigorously followed in practice. Procedures are included in the administrative/policy manual.

4.12   Internal controls on receipts (tuition; fees; cash receipts for lunchroom, concessions, field trips, and other activities) are sufficient to protect from error and fraud. There is separation of duties, where possible, between receiving funds, preparing deposits, making deposits, and entering records in accounts. Where separation of duties is not practical, additional oversight and confirmation is provided.

4.13   Cash received in the business office is receipted. Cash received outside the business office (field trips, fundraisers, concessions) is counted by two people at the point of receipt, securely transmitted to the business office, recounted at the business office, and credited to the appropriate accounts. A cash-receipt envelope or similar document records amounts and the initials of all persons who handle the cash before deposit.

4.14   Internal controls on expenses are appropriate. There is separation of duties, where possible, between authorizing payments, creating payment documents, signing checks, and mailing or electronically sending payments. Where separation of duties is not practical, additional oversight and confirmation is provided.

5. FACILITIES

School facilities are safe, clean, and well-maintained. The physical environment promotes and contributes to effective learning and accomplishment of the school's mission. Facilities present a positive image for the school in its community.

5.1   The facilities meet building and occupancy requirements promulgated by local, state, and federal laws. The school facility is safe.

5.2   Play areas are sufficient in size, appropriately equipped, and free of safety/health hazards. The school is in compliance with applicable federal, state, and local regulations. Compressible material in fall zones around equipment meets safety expectations.

5.3   Fire and health inspections are conducted as required by state or local code.

5.4   School buildings have been inspected for asbestos-containing building materials and the school is in compliance with AHERA, the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act.

5.5   Systems adequately monitor and adjust air quality to appropriate levels.

5.6   Lighting is adequate and appropriate in all areas used by students and staff.

5.7   Facilities offer spaces appropriate for school functions including instruction, administration, conferences, student activities, storage of school property, and storage of student belongings.

5.8   Space is adequate for entry, exit, and traffic flow within the facilities.

5.9   Storage facilities are appropriate in size and nature for the materials stored. Adequate storage space exists.

5.10   Custodial functions are established and assigned to appropriate personnel. The building's interior and exterior appearance gives evidence of sufficient custodial attention. The surrounding grounds are pleasantly designed and maintained.

5.11   The facilities are properly maintained. The school plans for, funds, and schedules regular maintenance. Building systems are serviced on a regular basis, and appropriate records are maintained.

6. SCHOOL CLIMATE AND ORGANIZATION

The school's organizational structure and climate facilitate spiritual and academic development and achievement of the school's mission. The environment integrates Christian faith in all aspects of the school program. The school's culture supports successful implementation of its programs for developing both students and staff. Roles, responsibilities, expectations, and reporting relationships are clearly defined. Administrative, instructional, and support staff are qualified,

competent, and sufficient in number to effectively deliver the educational programs of the school. Relationships among the staff and leadership are collegial and collaborative. Relationships with families and the sponsoring church and the community are positive and contribute to successful operation.

6.1   The school has operated effectively for a time that is sufficient to demonstrate its educational and operational continuity, stability, and effectiveness.

6.2   The school's design, organization, and climate support achievement of its mission.

6.3   Programs of study, athletics, activities, codes of conduct, and discipline policies reflect the Christian values expressed in the school's foundational documents.

6.4   An organizational chart or table and job descriptions specify levels of responsibility and reporting relationships.

6.5   The working environment for the staff provides spiritual and personal support and promotes collegiality, high expectations, trust, and recognition of the accomplishments and contributions of all staff members.

PERSONNEL

6.6   The administrative, faculty, and support staff members are sufficient in number and are appropriately qualified to carry out the program of the school and to provide for the needs of the students. (R)

6.7   Faculty members are qualified by training and experience in the areas to which they are assigned. As basic preparation, they possess a bachelor's degree from an accredited college/university. [The accrediting agency must be recognized by the US Department of Education or the college must be recognized by the AACS Accreditation Commission.] (R)

6.8   Teachers have current AACS certification. Certification helps to ensure that teachers are academically prepared and continue to develop as education professionals. (R)

6.9   School personnel are in agreement with the doctrinal statement and other general policies of the school.

6.10   A comprehensive staff development program allocates suitable time and resources to enable teachers to maintain credentials and continually develop the knowledge and skills that promote quality classroom management and instruction. (R)

6.11   Hiring, appointment, and termination procedures are ethical and comply with local, state, and national requirements.

6.12   Employment agreements are in writing, comply with local, state, and national requirements, and are honored by both parties.

6.13   The school defines policies and procedures that guide faculty in a document or manual that is regularly reviewed, updated as needed, and followed in practice.

6.14   Policies and procedures ensure a work environment that is safe and free of harassment.

6.15   The school provides assistance in preparing new and returning teachers for the school year. The school implements written procedures for orienting and mentoring new teachers.

6.16   An organized faculty meeting time is scheduled for the administration to communicate with the faculty.

6.17   The school maintains complete and accurate personnel records as required by law, including professional qualifications and credentials. These records are protected against loss by fire and theft and are available only to authorized persons.

6.18   Salaries are based on training, experience, extra duty, expertise, commitment, and merit. The salary schedule is clearly defined by the school and understood by the faculty. Salaries meet the guidelines set by the federal and state equal employment opportunity acts. The school has an established salary scale. A benefits schedule has been developed, describing what benefits are available and who qualifies for the various benefits.

6.19   The school has a procedure for recruiting new faculty and staff, screening and interviewing candidates, verifying philosophy, and providing applicants with necessary information about the school. Criteria include an assessment of the candidate's understanding of and commitment to the foundational beliefs and mission of the school.

6.20   The school has a procedure for the evaluation of faculty performance that is carried out in an ethical manner. The procedure provides a basis for decisions about the individual's performance and is clearly understood by members of the faculty. Criteria include an assessment of the teacher's understanding of and commitment to the foundational beliefs and mission of the school. (An annual or periodic evaluation is not the same as a classroom observation, although it is certainly informed by classroom observations. See indicator 6.21 regarding classroom observations.) (R)

6.21   The school's supervision programs provide direction and guidance for teachers. Formal and informal classroom observations inform decisions made by supervisors and provide instructional support. (R)

6.22   Teachers develop and supervisors review daily lesson plans. (R)

RELATIONSHIPS WITH FAMILIES, CHURCHES, AND COMMUNITY

6.23   The school understands its role within the total church ministry (if applicable) and works to enhance all aspects of the church ministry. The school also endeavors to maintain a good relationship with other churches in the general school community.

6.24   Families are viewed as an important source of information and insights about students. Parents are well informed as to the purposes, objectives, and procedures of the school. The school informs the parents of school events and programs. Procedures are available whereby parents may express their concerns and interests to school personnel.

6.25   The school demonstrates a good testimony among other Christian schools in the community. The school is a benefit to the community.

6.26   Any parent organization or booster club operates as an integral part of the overall school program and is under the direct supervision of the school administration. Its purpose and operating procedures must be communicated in written form to the entire school family.

6.27   The administration communicates the procedures parents should follow for communicating with students during the school day.

6.28   The school's publications present an accurate description of its organization, staff, program, and facilities. Publications and advertisements adhere to legal and ethical standards.

7. HEALTH AND SAFETY

The school provides a safe and orderly environment for teaching and learning. The school complies with local, state, and federal government health and safety requirements. Policies and procedures regarding health, safety, and crisis management are clearly written, communicated to students and staff and families, implemented, and regularly reviewed and updated.

7.1   The school facilities meet applicable regulations regarding fire protection and safety, including the conducting of regularly scheduled fire and disaster drills. The school will verify that it is operating in accordance with applicable federal, state, and local regulations.

7.2   Fire evacuation routes are posted in each classroom and as needed throughout the rest of the building.

7.3   The school takes sufficient and appropriate measures to ensure the safety and security of the students.

7.4   Systems exist to account for the whereabouts of students at all times.

7.5   The school has an effective system for controlling access to the school by visitors and other non-school persons.

7.6   The school maintains current immunization and health records, as required by state or local authorities, for all students and staff.

7.7   Safe drinking water is available throughout the day for the students and staff. Testing for lead and other substances is conducted as required by water source and state or local code.

7.8   The school can demonstrate that sufficient and appropriate measures are taken to ensure the safety and security of the students in case of accident or illness both on campus and at school functions away from the school campus.

7.9   The school develops working relationships with local authorities and health service providers.

7.10   The school complies with legal reporting requirements in cases of child abuse and neglect or other areas in which reporting is mandated. Policies that reflect state requirements are included in the faculty manual.

7.11   The educational program provides opportunities for students to develop knowledge, attitudes, and practices necessary for wellness and a healthy lifestyle.

7.12   Pedestrian and vehicle movement plans are in writing and proficiently enforced. These plans have been communicated to the school family.

7.13   The school has developed a crisis management plan and has trained the staff to implement the plan. The plan has been communicated to staff and students. Periodic drills are conducted to familiarize staff and students with procedures.

7.14   The crisis plan includes written policies, consistent with state law, that govern the presence of weapons on campus, including policies regarding arming personnel that are consistent with state law.

7.15   Appropriate training is provided for staff members for preventing the spread of infectious disease, including required blood-borne pathogens training.

7.16   The school appropriately manages the storage and administration of student medications.

7.17   The school has adopted appropriate hazard response policies (Hazard Communication Standard Training), including ready access to materials data sheets (MDS) for chemicals used in maintenance, science labs, and other functions of the school.

7.18   The school safely stores equipment and supplies. All hazardous chemicals are safely stored in locked closets or locked cabinets.

8. EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

The educational program of the school demonstrates commitment to the school's mission and core beliefs. The educational program conforms to accepted academic norms and reflects an awareness of current research and best practices. The program consists of a carefully planned and well-executed curriculum that includes appropriate academic standards, solid pedagogy, and assessment. It is developed to address the needs of all enrolled students and is designed to challenge learners at all levels. Effective policies and procedures direct the program. Instructional materials, technology, and equipment effectively support the design of the curriculum. Written curriculum guides are current, functional, available, and used by teachers and supervisors. The guides define the scope and sequence and objectives of the educational program. They describe the links between objectives, instruction, and assessment, and reflect sound approaches to teaching and learning.

CHARACTER, VALUES, AND SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

8.1   Bible is taught as a class at all grade levels. Chapel programs are regularly scheduled and provide appropriate spiritual instruction. Christian service opportunities are afforded all students.

8.2   The school implements programs that encourage Christian character development.

8.3   Biblical truth is integrated with the study of every academic discipline.

8.4   Community service programs reflect the school's commitment to Christian values.

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

8.5   The program provides instruction in biblical studies, language arts and literature (including early language development and the literacy skills of reading, writing, listening, and speaking), mathematics, the sciences, and history.

8.6   The program includes experiences in visual and performing arts, health, world languages, and physical education.

8.7   The program includes experiences that promote students' critical thinking, reasoning, problem-solving, and study skills.

8.8   The program includes instruction and application of information technology skills.

8.9   Students experience a variety of group learning settings (individual, small group, and large group).

8.10   The school establishes suitable grade-level and graduation requirements that lead students toward grade promotion, diploma, higher education, career, and successful adult living.

8.11   The school complies with all applicable federal, state, and local requirements, including attendance, length of school year, and length of class periods. In the absence of legal requirements, the school uses generally accepted norms of practice relating to academic credit, grade placement, academic recognition, transcripts, and diplomas. In the absence of a state standard, the minimum number of annual instructional hours is 990 for elementary students and 1080 for secondary students. Instructional hours include transition times between classes but do not include lunch and recess times.

8.12   The school provides accommodations for students with special needs or refers families to appropriate services to meet those needs.

8.13   When special education services are provided, suitable instructional strategies are implemented by appropriately trained faculty.

8.14   Graduation requirements meet or exceed state guidelines and are clearly communicated to all constituents.

8.15   Classes for which high school credit is given meet for the number of clock hours required by state guidance. In the absence of a state standard, high school classes must meet for a minimum of 120 clock hours per high school credit.

8.16   Class schedules and a school calendar are printed and distributed in a timely manner.

CURRICULUM GUIDE

Schools that have developed curriculum guides under models approved earlier for the AACS accreditation process may continue to follow those models if they choose to do so.

8.17   The curricular designs meet the general goals for the school and are consistent with the philosophy of Christian education and the mission statement. Each curriculum is logically sequenced and defines the performances expected of students. Curricular materials are selected according to criteria determined by the philosophy and objectives of the school. The curricular designs involve the entire faculty and are periodically reevaluated. Technology has an important role within the curriculum.

8.18   The school defines the academic program of the school in a document or manual (curriculum guide) that is regularly reviewed, updated as needed, and followed in classroom practice. The curriculum guide includes the elements described in the following indicators: philosophy statement, scope and sequence, and curriculum maps that include core competency objectives. Curriculum guides are functional, available, and used by teachers to guide instruction.

8.19   The study of each subject is guided by a statement of educational philosophy that includes a biblical foundation for that study. (R)

8.20   Scope and sequence guides state the subject content areas addressed in each subject at each grade level. The scope and sequence charts are developed collaboratively by the faculty. Scope and sequence charts correspond with the subject's objectives. (R)

8.21   Curriculum maps identify the core competency objectives expected of students at each grade level. Biblical integration objectives or principles are included for each grade level. Objectives are simply stated and understandable to students and parents. Objectives are stated as student performance objectives. Assessments correspond with the objectives for each course of study. (R)

8.22   Ample instructional time is allocated for each subject and meets the minimum time requirement expected by state agencies.

8.23   Teachers address the various learning styles by using instructional strategies and learning activities that challenge individual students.

8.24   Procedures require the periodic review and/or revision of each curricular program. The evaluation considers the student expectations identified for the course of study, assessment results, changes in academic disciplines, and changes in government expectations. [This standard requires a schedule and systematic procedure for review of the curriculum guide and curriculum material after completion of the curriculum guide, usually included in the administrative manual.]

8.25   Sufficient instructional materials are available. The administration and faculty cooperate to provide appropriate textbooks for student use. Periodic evaluation of textbooks involves the administration and teaching staff.

9. ASSESSMENT AND EVIDENCE OF STUDENT LEARNING

The school systematically collects and rigorously analyzes evidence of student learning from multiple sources. Evidence of student learning is used to evaluate and improve the curriculum, instruction, professional development and support services. Grade-appropriate progress in student learning and performance is expected. Assessment results and student progress are accurately and systematically reported to parents and the school community.

9.1   Leadership and staff commit to, participate in, and share accountability for student learning.

9.2   Teachers use a variety of assessment tools to evaluate student performance and teaching effectiveness.

9.3   Assessment of student learning and performance is aligned with the curriculum and instruction in a coherent system that is consistent with the school's philosophy and mission.

9.4   Assessments measure students' understanding of and commitment to biblical truth in addition to academic knowledge and performance.

9.5   Assessment results are analyzed regularly for (a) individual students as they move through the school, (b) cohorts of students as they move through the school, (c) comparable groups (local, state, and national) outside the school.

9.6   Standardized tests are used annually in either pre-determined grades or all grades. Results are used by the administration and teachers to assess learning, to evaluate the curriculum, and to appraise teacher effectiveness. Student progress is monitored and communicated to parents.

9.7   Assessment results are used to make decisions regarding allocation of resources.

9.8   Assessment results are used by teachers to adapt instruction to meet identified learning needs of individual students and groups of students.

9.9   The school communicates its assessment policies and practices to the school community (handbooks, websites, policy manuals).

9.10   Students learn and perform at expected levels or interventions occur so that progress is made toward expected levels of performance.

9.11   Assessment results are the basis for making recommendations to families whose children may benefit from further evaluation. Referrals are made for early identification of possible learning disabilities or health conditions.

9.12   Graduation protocols include appropriate testing to help students make the transition to further education or career.

9.13   The school has established procedures to inform parents of the student's character, conduct, and academic performance during and at the end of a grading period.

9.14   Administrative procedures are in place for documenting and maintaining current academic, medical, disciplinary, and attendance records. The accreditation team is given access to student records for review and documentation.

9.15   General standards regarding transcript control and use and confidentiality of student records are known and observed.

9.16   Provision is made for the permanent maintenance of all student records, including a plan for storage of, and access to, records in the event the school ceases operation. Student records are protected against loss by fire and theft. If student records are not fire-protected, a duplicate copy (hard copy or digital) of essential records must be retained in off-site storage for at least the most recent seven years of school operation.

10. STUDENT SERVICES

The school implements or coordinates with families, the sponsoring church, and the school community to provide or refer students to services that optimize opportunities for academic and spiritual development. Student services are systematic and integral to the educational program. They are provided by qualified personnel, adequately supported, and appropriate to the philosophy and mission of the school.

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

10.1   The school acknowledges each student as a unique creation of God and endeavors to provide the student with direction to fulfill the Lord's will for his or her life. The school seeks to work with the parents to identify and meet the spiritual, academic, social, and physical needs of the student. The spiritual counseling and guidance program meets the needs of the students in harmony with the school's philosophy and mission.

10.2   Student support services address academic skills development, social skills development, personal growth, and career planning.

10.3   Counselors, administrators, teachers, and other staff share responsibility for providing guidance and support to students. For high school students, an academic guidance counsellor(s) or advisor(s) is assigned to provide guidance regarding course selection and college or career planning.

10.4   The school is sensitive to the importance of non-academic needs of students and works with the school community to address students' emotional and social needs.

10.5   Assessment data are used to adapt curriculum and teaching methods, provide personalized guidance, and identify appropriate program placement for students.

10.6   The extended care program adheres to state and local guidelines. In the absence of state or local guidelines, the school follows reasonable child/staff ratios and facility requirements.

ADMISSIONS, PLACEMENT, AND STUDENT CONDUCT

10.7   The school's publications present an accurate description of its organization, staff, program, and facilities, including an adherence to applicable legal requirements.

10.8   The school defines and publishes the policies and procedures that affect students and parents in a document or manual that is regularly reviewed, updated as needed, and followed in practice.

10.9   The school's admission procedures are consistent with its philosophy and mission and Christian identity. Applicants and their families are clearly informed of the school's philosophy/mission, the nature and extent of the educational program and services available, school policies, and expectations for student conduct and academic performance.

10.10 The school is capable of meeting the educational needs of the students. Evidence suggests a reasonable expectation for success in the school program before a student is enrolled.

10.11 Financial information and other parental responsibilities are clearly stated in writing and made available to parents prior to enrollment.

10.12 Procedures for suspending and terminating enrollment are written and communicated to students, parents, and teachers.

10.13 The administration tracks and reviews voluntary withdrawals.

10.14 The school provides adequate and competent supervision of all students.

10.15 The discipline program is communicated to parents, students, and teachers. The discipline program is consistent with the philosophy and mission of the school and is uniformly enforced. Discipline records are available only to authorized persons.

10.16 The school's dress code is properly communicated to parents, students, and teachers and is consistent with the philosophy and mission of the school. Dress code policies are uniformly enforced.

TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

10.17 All motor vehicles operated by the school are in compliance with all applicable federal, state, and local regulations.

10.18 Drivers are qualified, properly licensed, and CDL drivers participate in a drug and alcohol testing program as required by federal law.

10.19 Transportation policies and procedures and safety instructions are communicated to staff, drivers, parents, and students.

10.20 Maintenance records are current on all vehicles used for school transportation. Records are made available to the accreditation team for review.

FOOD SERVICES

10.21 The facilities, equipment, and staff requirements meet acceptable standards.

10.22 Food service meets nutritional requirements and aesthetic expectations.

10.23 Food service facilities are inspected regularly and meet the health and safety requirements of applicable authorities.

SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

10.24 The school implements policies and procedures to identify and address the needs of students with special needs.

10.25 The school is in compliance with applicable local, state, and federal requirements related to students with special needs.

ALUMNI SERVICES

10.26 The school seeks to maintain good relations with its alumni through such means as newsletters, surveys, special events, or an alumni association.

11. STUDENT LIFE AND STUDENT ACTIVITIES

The school provides access to student activities that are age- and developmentally appropriate to supplement the academic curriculum. Activities include academic, social, athletic, and service activities as appropriate to the philosophy and mission of the school. Activities are non-discriminatory and are selected to foster intellectual, cultural, and social growth as well as physical health and wellness. Student activities provide opportunities for student leadership and development of student interests. All student activities are adequately supervised and are managed by school governance and leadership.

11.1 The school's philosophy and biblical standards govern all extracurricular activities.

11.2 Proper planning is evident for all activities.

11.3 Student activities provide opportunities for student leadership, develop student responsibility and initiative, and encourage cooperation among students.

11.4 Students, staff, and the school community are encouraged to provide input and participate in student activities.

11.5 Staff members, parents, and volunteers who lead or participate in student activities are approved by the school's leadership, suitably qualified for the responsibilities they are given, and provide appropriate supervision to students.

11.6 The school recognizes student accomplishments and contributions in meaningful ways.

12. INFORMATION RESOURCES AND TECHNOLOGY

Students and staff have access to appropriate information resources and technology. These resources are sufficient to support the school's educational program. They encourage students and staff to extend their knowledge and skills. Instruction is provided for students and staff to facilitate their use of resources for inquiry, research, and instruction. Equipment works properly and is well-maintained.

12.1 An adequate supply of well-maintained audio-visual, electronic, and duplicating equipment is available for classroom use. Proper control of equipment is implemented.

LIBRARY

Indicators for schools with libraries. (DNA indicator included for schools without libraries.)

12.2 Library facilities and services support reading development. (R)

12.3 Library facilities and services and information resources support student and faculty research. (R)

12.4 Information resources are periodically reviewed to ensure that they are current and relevant.

12.5 Teachers are given opportunities to recommend information resources that will support their curriculum and student reading and research. (R)

12.6 Library skills are taught to students during scheduled visits.

12.7 The library/media center staff is sufficient and appropriately qualified to provide effective services to students and staff. (R)

12.8 Information resources are age- and developmentally appropriate and current.

12.9 The collection of print and non-print material is carefully selected to reflect the school's philosophy and mission.

12.10 Students and staff have regular access to information resources. (R)

12.11 The school has a policy and procedure, approved by school governance, to select library and media materials and to respond when materials are questioned.

Indicators for schools without libraries. (DNA indicator included for schools with libraries.)

12.12 Classroom collections support reading development for K–8 students. Classroom collections include age- and developmentally appropriate titles.

12.13 Classroom collections support enrichment reading for 9–12 students.

12.14 Classroom collections are inventoried or cataloged, and a combined record is maintained.

12.15 Students in grades 5–12 have age-appropriate access to online resources for research at school.

12.16 Hard-copy research tools (dictionaries, encyclopedias, atlases, and similar tools) are available in classrooms or in a resource center to support student learning and research.

12.17 Students learn library skills and research methods on scheduled trips to a local library.

12.18 The school has created a "reading development and research" manual that describes the classroom collections, includes a brief scope-and-sequence chart of library and research skills taught through the curriculum, and includes a K–12 plan for library field trips for learning library skills and research tools.

TECHNOLOGY

12.19 Technology resources are adequately maintained and supported with funding from the school's budget, consistent with the school's mission, size, and resources.

12.20 The technology resources staff is sufficient and qualified to provide effective service to students and staff.

12.21 Instruction includes the use of current technology resources and equipment.

12.22   The school implements written policies for acceptable use of technology.

12.23   The school plans for and uses current technology to support student learning, instruction, records maintenance, and communication with families. The school improvement plan includes planning for technology acquisition and professional development needed to implement new technologies in the classroom, media center, and offices.