



A.	STANDARD for MISSION, VISION, and PLANNING Excellent schools create a plan for the school that aligns with their mission and goals and is consistent with the Scriptures and the ACCS vision of classical Christian education. (See ACCS Membership Handbook pp. 8-15)
A.1.	CLASSICAL CHRISTIAN COMMITMENT Excellent schools promote themselves as classical Christian schools and express their mission statement and statement of faith in ways that reflect the distinctives of classical Christian education.
a.	Principle A school's mission statement and its statement of faith assure parents and the public that the school's core commitments align with both the Scriptures and ACCS's description of classical Christian education. A school also expresses its core commitments in its bylaws and other governing documents like its Portrait of a Graduate.
b.	Indicators i. The school prominently displays "classical Christian" on its website and in its marketing materials. ii. If a school represents itself as a "preparatory school," it frames such language in a way that prioritizes its classical and Christian commitments. iii. The school's governing documents define marriage, gender, and human sexuality according to a historical biblical understanding.
c.	Documentation i. Publications: - o Mission Statement - o Statement of Faith (must include definitions of marriage, gender, and human sexuality). - o Core Values ii. Exhibits - o Marketing language reflecting "classical Christian" iii. Response - o How is Scripture integrated into school programs and curriculum? <i>Note: Interviews with the board, administrators, and students should discuss the school's mission, Portrait of a Graduate statement, and other core values.</i>



A.2.	FUTURE PLANNING Excellent schools create a comprehensive long-range plan to improve the school.
a.	Principle Because school boards oversee the school's future needs, they must adopt a long-range or strategic plan to improve the school over the next three years or more. The plan must ground itself in the school's identity, reflect its convictions, and set measurable, manageable goals that advance its mission. The board must define the planning process, assign personnel, and oversee the plan's creation, approval, updates, and annual review. Some common tools may contribute to the school plan required by this standard, but they do not comprise the plan itself. For example, a SWOT analysis can inform the planning process, and stability markers such as hard income coverage, retention rates, and debt ratios can indicate whether the school is meeting its goals, but the plan itself establishes those goals.
b.	Indicators: i. The plan specifies goals, timelines for accomplishing each goal, and details about who is responsible for each goal. ii. The plan analyzes the school's position in the local educational marketplace. iii. The plan sets goals to maximize sustainable financial resources. iv. The plan sets goals for enrollment toward a clearly defined optimal size. v. The plan sets goals for the long-term control, development, and/or improvement of school facilities. This ordinarily means the ownership of its own facilities, but other arrangements may be adequate. vi. The plan sets goals for adding faculty and staff positions that will sufficiently support facilities, operations, and enrollment in the future. The number of faculty positions ought to keep pace with enrollment projections, commensurate with clearly-defined, optimal, faculty-student ratios. vii. The plan sets goals to provide salaries and benefits that retain employees, foster their commitment to the school, and incentivize excellence in teaching. <i>Note: The indicators are topics common to strategic planning and items typically addressed in a long-range plan. However, for this standard, the evaluation is based on the plan itself, rather than the process used to create the plan.</i>
c.	Documentation i. Publications:



	○ School's long-range plan. The plan demonstrates strategic thinking and identifies 3—6 initiatives as a primary focus, along with concrete ways to measure the successful completion of each initiative. ○ Long-range or strategic financial plan ○ Master Site Plan (Optional) ii. Responses: ○ Explanation of how the board annually reviews and implements the plan. ○ Explanation of how the board sets annual objectives for the head of school that are related to the school's future plans. iii. <i>Note: During the board dinner, the school's future plans will be discussed.</i>
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B.	STANDARD <i>for</i> ACCOUNTABILITY, INDEPENDENCE, and STABILITY Excellent schools are financially accountable, stable, and free to implement their mission unencumbered.
B.1.	FINANCIAL STABILITY Excellent schools are financially stable and have ongoing constituent support for the school's mission.
a.	Principle ACCIS seeks to ensure the viability of our accredited schools. A school that demonstrates financial stability and growth over time will likely continue to thrive in its operation.
b.	Indicators i. The school receives at least 80% of its income from student tuition. ii. Budgeted income from fundraising is realistic and based on amounts raised for the past few fiscal years.
c.	Documentation i. Exhibits: ○ Annual budget. ○ Profit and loss statement(s) for the last 3 to 5 years. ii. Response: ○ Is the school borrowing income from the following year to meet the needs of the current year?



- List the financial reports regularly reviewed by the board.
- Explain how tuition is set annually.

Note: A member of the visit team will review school finances with the head of school (and finance officer.)

B.2. FINANCIAL INDEPENDENCE AND OUTSIDE INFLUENCE

A school's income must always support the ongoing, faithful practice of its mission. When a school relies on a single external funding source or a single donor for a significant portion of its annual budget, its board must ensure that the school will not compromise its mission if these funds become either unavailable or available with conditions attached. Likewise, if a third-party scholarship program or a para-government organization provides a single financial source for a significant portion of the school's budget, it must not encumber or threaten the mission of the school.

a. Principle

As previously stated, ACCS accredits viable schools. A viable school is overseen by a board of directors or trustees that acts without outside coercion and in the interest of the school's stated mission. The school must disclose its financial support and explain the steps the board has taken to mitigate the possible loss of these funds, or ensure that the board can end receipt of these funds that come with compromising conditions. While ACCS is thankful that ESAs and vouchers make private school tuition more affordable, we view state funding of tuition as both a threat and an opportunity. We are concerned that these funding programs may function as a modern Trojan horse. To ensure long-term stability, schools must take measures to mitigate the potential loss of these funds.

b. Indicators

- i. Board-approved policy or guidelines that describe the board's rationale for participation in ESA programs. Schools take steps to mitigate the potential loss of these funds and remain prepared to withdraw from these programs to ensure faithfulness to their mission. Steps *may include* any of the following measures:
 - Schools receive these funds as a limited and set percentage of budgeted revenue.
 - The school limit for accepted funds per student is below the state-allocated maximum to ensure that parents are responsible for at least part of the student's tuition.
 - Schools create a reserve fund to use if these programs threaten the school's mission. The reserve fund holds enough to keep the school operating for a defined period without state funds.



c. Documentation will include:

i. Exhibits

- Anonymous list of donor contributions.
- Report showing *financial* support and/or *in-kind gifts* from its constituency (which may include products and/or services) to the school and all situations where any individual (or external source) contributes a significant portion of the school's annual budgeted income.
- Any donor or funding source controlled by a single entity, government, or person that makes up more than 20% of the operating budget. In states with universal school choice funding or education savings account (ESA) funding, revenue from these sources may exceed 20% of a school's budgeted tuition income, but schools must identify the source and percentage of budgeted income.
- A board policy or financial plan to mitigate the potential loss of these funds. ACCS schools must acknowledge that they would close before compromising the school's mission to continue receiving funds.

ii. Response:

- Soft income (other than tuition income) must be clearly listed and identified.
- Explain what percentage of budgeted income is received from school choice funds?
- Financial narrative that describes challenges facing the school and efforts taken to address those challenges.
- Church sponsored schools: Briefly explain the church's role in setting the annual budget. Describe the church's financial support for the school.

Note: When applying to participate in an ESA program, schools should clearly express their right to operate according to their religious beliefs. (ACCS has sample language from ADF for schools to use.)

B.3. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT: REVIEW AND REPORT

Excellent schools have clear and appropriate financial policies, controls, and communication, and they conduct at least one financial management review by an independent accounting source during each accreditation cycle.

a. Principle

Schools must operate with a high level of financial accountability. To complete this report, schools must work with someone independent of the school. This individual will meet with school personnel and review school documents to assess financial management practices. Using the Financial Management Review questions in Appendix A, the reviewer will prepare and submit a report on the school's financial practices. While a formal CPA



	“accounting audit” may be costly and unnecessary for this purpose, an examination by an independent, qualified professional—whether an accountant or bookkeeper or finance officer from another ACCS accredited school—not directly associated with the school—is the minimum required to provide an objective assessment of how the school conducts its financial business internally.
b.	Indicators i. Clearly defined, written policies on internal controls to prevent misappropriation or fraud. ii. A detailed, board-approved budget iii. Financial policies that guide the board, administrators, and staff in how to manage school finances. iv. Accounting records that conform to the common principles of accounting, are up to date, and correctly recorded. v. Appropriate communication of finances to the board at least quarterly, and to parents annually. vi. Policies requiring that the school board oversees the school’s financial operations
c.	Documentation vii. Exhibits: ○ Completed Financial Integrity Review Form (filled out by an independent financial reviewer.) See Appendix A. ○ For schools receiving school choice funds, a financial review (not a full audit), completed by an accounting firm.
B.4.	ETHICAL INTEGRITY AND RESOLUTION Excellent schools are free of public ethical scandal or they have taken appropriate action to resolve them.
a.	Principle ACCS refrains from accrediting any school involved in an unresolved public ethical scandal. The key term is “unresolved.” We acknowledge that we live in a fallen world where sin is inevitable—even within accredited schools—so the crucial aspect is how the issue is addressed if it arises.
b.	Indicators i. Any major conflict has been resolved, insofar as it depends on the member school within the boundaries of its mission and governance, at the time of application and accreditation. ii. Schools have followed their own policies expressed in expected conduct and morals.



c.	Documentation i. Exhibits: - o <i>Documentation is not required. Schools have the option to disclose issues that have led to public criticism. The standard is included to describe what ACCS expects of an accredited school.</i>
B.5.	ENROLLMENT AND EMPLOYMENT STABILITY Excellent schools have sufficient, stable enrollment and employee retention.
a.	Principle Stable schools generally maintain consistent enrollment numbers over time. However, ACCS acknowledges that any school may experience a temporary enrollment decline due to factors such as faithful adherence to the school's founding mission and vision or changes in local employment conditions.
b.	Indicators i. Actual enrollment numbers will approximate or equal the budgeted enrollment numbers. ii. Student retention rates are greater than 80%. This rate is calculated by dividing the number of students who left the school between October 1st of the previous year and September 30th of the current year, excluding graduates, by the current year's total enrollment, then expressing the result as a percentage. iii. In normal circumstances, overall student enrollment must not decline more than 10% from year to year.
c.	Documentation i. Exhibits: Data for the past five years in the following areas, alongside an explanation of the trends and what they mean for the school. - o Enrollment numbers detailing grammar enrollment, secondary enrollment, total enrollment, and the overall retention rate. - o Teacher retention including the total number of teachers, the number who left each year, and a summary of the main reasons that teachers left.. - o Administrator retention, primarily of the head of school, assistant administrators, and campus deans.



C.	STANDARD <i>for</i> GOVERNANCE <i>and</i> ADMINISTRATION Excellent schools have established adequate structures and procedures for governance and administration in order to achieve their mission.
C.1.	CONSTITUTIONAL ORGANIZATION Excellent schools have a written constitution and/or bylaws that comprehensively and clearly establish a basis for administration and governance, including explicit lines of authority and areas of responsibility.
a.	Principle A school must know its mission, the reason for its existence, how it is structured, and its lines of authority so that it can operate smoothly and consistently. The school must adopt and publish these standards to help develop a trusting relationship between the school, parents, and the local community.
b.	Indicators i. Bylaws define the main purpose(s) and responsibilities of the board. ii. Bylaws are current and reflect changes approved by the board. iii. Board members know the limits and extent of their decision-making authority.
c.	Documentation i. Publications: - o School by-laws (or similar documents). ii. Responses: - o What is the governance structure of the school? (e.g., policy governance, Carver governance, operational board, church church-board, or other.) - o Identify specific sections of the by-laws that list the board's primary purposes and areas of responsibility.



C.2. BOARD GOVERNANCE

Excellent schools have a board of directors or trustees that determines policy in the areas of administration, business management, academic affairs, and student life. Governance refers to the group or individuals charged with overseeing the direction of the school and fulfilling the legal obligations of governance. This may include an organization, governing body, board of directors (or trustees), board of education, or some other configuration. The board manages conflicts of interest held by individual members and arising in its oversight of the school. Church sponsored schools may divide these responsibilities between a board and an administrative team.

a. Principle

The National Council of Nonprofits stated, “Board members are the fiduciaries who steer the organization towards a sustainable future by adopting sound, ethical, and legal governance and financial management policies, as well as by making sure the nonprofit has adequate resources to advance its mission”. Regardless of the school’s governance model, boards must focus on the aforementioned duties rather than the day-to-day operations of the school. ACCS recognizes that married couples often serve as school staff, especially in start-up schools. Sometimes, board members and administrators serve as teachers or coaches. The board must recognize these tangled organizational charts and have policies for managing these relationships.

b. Indicators

- i. Those on the school’s administrative team reference the school’s policy manual. By doing so, they demonstrate that they actually use and follow the manual, and that it is more than a dust-gathering binder.
- ii. The policy manual seeks to profoundly integrate the school’s core mission and beliefs throughout all aspects of the institution.

c. Documentation

- i. Publications:
 - Policy manual (or other governance documents)
- ii. Exhibits:
 - Board minutes from the last 6 -12 months
 - Conflict of interest policy. (See sample policies at the National Council of Nonprofits website.)
- iii. Response:
 - Explain where all policies exist, indicating whether there is a separate policy manual, or if policies exist in handbooks. If policies are in the faculty or parent-student handbook, refer to them as well. Identify the specific sections in these policy documents that address items in this standard.



C.3. TRUSTEES (BOARD MEMBERS)	Excellent schools have trustees who are qualified for their position, according to the standard in the school policy. Trustees can articulate the classical Christian vision for their school. The board ensures that all members receive adequate training in classical Christian philosophy and school board practices.
a. Principle	Trustees, collectively, are the guardians of the mission and vision for the school and its success. The paradigm of classical Christian education challenges the common understanding of school to such a degree that mission and vision drift is easy and common. For this reason, the school must carefully select trustees and they must be trained to understand, appreciate, and deeply support the foundations of the classical Christian vision; furthermore, they must understand that <i>serving on a classical Christian school board differs from serving on other types of nonprofit boards</i>.
b. Indicators	i. Governance refrains from undermining the authority of the leadership to conduct the daily operations of the school. ii. Schools apply the same documented care in selecting trustees as they do in hiring administrators and teachers. iii. Effective trustees either serve for multiple terms or on a permanent basis. iv. Trustees sign a statement of faith. v. Trustees undergo basic training from the ACCS or another source and are regularly engaged in learning through attending conferences; participating in training sessions, reading groups, or mentoring opportunities; or other forms of training and development. vi. The training processes will require prospective members to learn and show that they understand classical Christian philosophy and pedagogy. vii. The board conducts annual improvement activities including board self-evaluations or readings on board best practices.
c. Documentation	i. Publications: (Bylaws and/or Board Policy Manual): - o Cite policies regarding the qualifications of trustees. - o Cite policies regarding the election of trustees. - o Cite policies regarding the training of trustees. ii. Exhibits: - o Formally approved plan for the training of board members. Training topics must specifically review the school's foundational documents and history, as well as the general topics of boardsmanship and classical Christian



	education. iii. Response: o Reference to the board policy and training for how to receive parent complaints. <i>Note: These topics (selection and training) will be discussed during the board dinner.</i>
C.4. EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP	Excellent schools provide their Head of School with a clear job description. The Head of School effectively serves as the liaison between the board and staff and is readily available to the teachers for support and guidance. By policy, the head of school receives an annual evaluation from the board.
a. Principle	Organizations benefit from a single leader, who aligns their mission, vision, and operations. As Christ is the head of the Church, a chief priest led the Old Testament temple system, and a husband is the head of a family, so too a school benefits from a single leader—the Head of School. He represents the school to the board, the board to the school, and the school to the community. While he may have others to support and aid him in these duties, he is the leader of the entire school, accountable for its sound operation and for providing uniformity and consistency in its day-to-day operations. A well-written job description protects both the Head of School and the board.
b. Indicators	i. A written set of attributes or virtues that are a model for the head of school position. ii. One administrator is empowered to run the day-to-day operations of the school. iii. The head of school receives a list of priorities to complete each year based on the school's long-range plan. iv. At the start of the year, the head of school is familiar with the process used for his evaluation. v. The school has a functioning head of school support and evaluation committee (HSEC) or similar committee. (Optional)
c. Documentation	i. Publication - o Board Policy or other document outlining process for head of school's annual evaluation. ii. Exhibit: - o Head of School job description - o Annual survey of head leadership effectiveness by the faculty and staff (Optional)



	iii. Response: Has the head of school received a written formal evaluation from the board in each of the past five years? Please list the dates. <i>Note: Do not include actual evaluations in the self-study.</i>
C.5. CONFLICT RESOLUTION (GRIEVANCE POLICIES)	Excellent schools base their policies for resolving school conflicts between administrators, faculty, and students on biblical principles.
a. Principle	While not all situations can be anticipated, having a general process for addressing conflicts within the school is essential. The Bible provides guidelines for resolving conflicts, which must be followed by those who submit to Christ. In any large group, sin will occur, therefore, schools must proactively develop principled conflict resolution guidelines in advance, rather than reacting when difficulties arise.
b. Indicators	i. In general, grievance policies must require that conflict is dealt with between the affected parties, and then brought to an appropriate chain of command if the grievance escalates. ii. Grievances found in the official record should show examples of when the organization adhered to these principles. iii. Except for certain complaints about the head of school, there is no automatic right to appeal directly to the board.
c. Documentation	i. Publication: Citation to the grievance policy in each: - Policy Manual - Faculty Handbook - Parent-Student Handbook
C.6. RECORDS	Excellent schools maintain complete, accurate, legible, and secure records. These include board minutes, school personnel files, student files, and administrative reports.
a. Principle	An excellent school professionally documents what it is doing while also protecting the privacy of those it serves. These records are handled, organized, and secured, in distinct



	ways depending on their sensitivity.
b.	Indicators i. A record plan for electronic records that provides for security and backup. ii. Files demonstrate completeness, a standard organization for each file type, with similar documents stored together.
c.	Documentation i. Publication: ii. Exhibit: - o Cite any policy that addresses record retention. iii. Response: - o Where are these records stored? Visit committees will examine that records are complete and consistently organized with similar documents stored together. <i>Note: The visit committee will evaluate records during the site visit, so schools do not need to include them in the self-study.</i>
C.7.	HEALTH, SECURITY, AND STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS Excellent schools meet state and local health, safety, and security requirements as well as any state statutory requirements for operating a private school.
a.	Principle State, county, and municipal authorities have requirements for health and safety that are, in general, consistent with a biblical view of civil government. ACCS desires to support these requirements when they are not in conflict with Scripture and when they are not a gross governmental overreach. Schools have a responsibility “<i>in loco parentis</i>” to provide for the physical well-being of students entrusted to their care.
b.	Indicators i. Schools must be aware of state and local requirements for private schools.
c.	Documentation i. Exhibits: - o State laws: Demonstrate requirements and compliance with laws concerning length of the school year, hours of classroom instruction, and other requirements specified by the state in which the school resides. - o Regulations or requirements concerning vaccination reporting, and evidence



	of the school's subsequent compliance. ○ Other Health: If your school is required to do CPR or concussion training, or other health related requirements, please document both the requirement and its satisfaction. ○ Safety: Certificates from annual fire inspections or building inspections and any risk management reports. ○ Schedule of School Drills required by state or local laws for Safety Training ○ Security: Comprehensive written security and crisis management plans and training.
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D.	STANDARD <i>for</i> CULTIVATION of STUDENT VIRTUE <i>and the</i> SCHOOL COMMUNITY Excellent schools establish a systemic school community that seeks to cultivate Christian virtue and living. (<u>II Peter 1:5–6</u> , <u>Phil 4:8</u>) Note: The visit committee will primarily assess Section D standards through observations and interviews during the visit. The documentation serves as the foundation; the practical application of the principles is of greater importance in the evaluation.
D.1.	ADMISSIONS PROCESS Excellent schools exercise admission and retention policies that adhere to the school's mission and that support a biblical Christian ethos within the school.
a.	Principle Schools consist of students, faculty, and programs, each playing a crucial role in forming <i>paideia</i> in students. Whether a school is missional or covenantal, enrolling families whose values contrast sharply with those of the school community will inevitably disrupt the school's ethos. Students will be conflicted over the acceptance of what is taught versus what is present in the community, especially regarding issues such as LGBTQ inclusion or the enrollment of non-Christian families (e.g., Mormon, Muslim).
b.	Indicators i. Careful admissions practices that screen students based on specific criteria. ii. The person responsible for family interviews can articulate the types of families the school admits and what determines their qualification.



	c. Documentation i. Publications: ○ Admissions policy guidelines that describe the school’s goals for the religious makeup or the constituency of the school. ○ Student Enrollment Application ii. Exhibits: ○ Internal, non-published admissions guidelines or practices that may include direction regarding unbelievers or those who openly practice non-biblical life choices. ○ Internal examples of family interviews or admissions documents <i>Note: The visit committee will interview the admissions director.</i>
D.2.	AESTHETICS Excellent schools apply classical aesthetic standards to their classrooms, hallways, facilities, programs, and staff.
a.	Principle The standards of Truth, Goodness, and Beauty are noble and humanizing, intertwined, and God-given. Students, faculty, and parents are influenced greatly by aesthetic standards. “Higher” rather than “vulgar” (low) standards help create a learning environment that depicts transcendence. While not the only “beautiful” form of art, the classical forms of music, art, performance, and architecture are less likely to reflect modern false-values connected with subjective and individualistic expression, and they help to ground schools in the transcendent.
b.	Indicators i. The school demonstrates its educational philosophy through its decor. ii. The Western canon of thought (writings and great books), literature, fine art, theater, and music are used to build appreciation and affection for them. iii. The school prominently presents important and classical works of great art. Older forms that were based in a pursuit of ideal Truth, Goodness, and Beauty are elevated examples. iv. Products of twentieth and twenty-first-century art and music are rightly assessed and ordered in the school environment, with earlier art given more prominence.



c.	Documentation v. Exhibits: ○ Aesthetic vision for campus and classrooms ○ Directions to teachers on classroom decor ○ A listing of music chosen for chapel, typical works for recitation or speech meets, and titles of theatrical plays. <i>Note: The practical application of this standard will be assessed during the on-site visit primarily through observations. While documentation is important and will be reviewed as a foundational element, the application of these principles is of greater priority.</i>
D.3.	DISCIPLINE: HABITS AND MANNERS Excellent schools maintain and follow discipline and behavioral standards that are adequate, just, and ennobling, derived from Scripture. They emphasize habits, manners, and decorum among students and staff that align with Christian and Western traditions appropriate to the school's mission.
a.	Principle Classical Christian education emphasizes moral and spiritual training and such schools desire to impart a way of life to their students (Ephesians 6:4 , Proverbs 22:6). Habits formed from an early age often become ingrained and, thus, prevalent within a Christian community. A well-ordered environment that facilitates instruction and learning must be evident to visitors in the hallways, on the playground, and in the classrooms. Students learn many lessons by how school discipline is handled.
b.	Indicators i. Order and joy is evident throughout the school community. ii. Teachers understand that effective instruction is the first means to minimize misbehavior. iii. The school has developed consistent expectations and practices for grammar and upper school teachers. Teachers understand that to discipline students is to love them (Hebrews 12:6). iv. Clearly communicated standards for student conduct. v. Students show evident respect towards adults, and faculty and staff show respect towards their respective authorities. vi. Students display manners and politeness in the classroom and across the entire school. vii. As appropriate, regular practices in prayer, song, and memory are present in the school day. viii. Student dress code and observed grooming standards are consistent with the aforementioned principles.



c.	Documentation i. Publications: ○ Parent-Student handbook. ○ Faculty handbook. ○ Policies or written expectations for students that include habits /etiquette, uniforms, and orderly behavior ii. Exhibits: ○ Any forms or written tools used to communicate with parents regarding discipline. iii. Response: ○ Note the page numbers of the expectations for student conduct in the Parent-Student handbook and the Faculty handbook, <i>Note: The practical application this standard will be assessed during the on-site visit primarily through observations and interviews. While documentation is important and will be reviewed as a foundational element, the application of these principles is of greater priority.</i>
D.4.	ACTIVITIES Excellent schools include non-classroom activities that are consistent with the school's vision for providing moral and spiritual training to students.
a.	Principle All school-sponsored activities must align with the vision, mission, and core values of a classical Christian school, and schools may elect not to offer certain activities that do not support these principles.
b.	Indicators i. The school can articulate how specific activities flow out of its mission statement. ii. Student behavior during non-classroom activities is consistent with documented expectations. iii. Spiritual qualifications, conduct, and discipleship practices for coaches are comparable to spiritual standards for teachers. iv. To help create a school identity, upper schools provide competitive opportunities for students, which may include school House programs.



c.	Documentation will include: i. Publications: - o Activities, Athletics, or House Handbooks - o Policies on student participation and behavior in these activities - o Policies on school competition against schools with transgender athletes. (A written policy is optional.) - o Hiring policies for coaches, etc., or a list of qualifications for staff holding these positions.
D.5.	MALE AND FEMALE ROLES Excellent schools encourage male/female roles that are consistent with biblical Christian virtues.
a.	Principle “God created them male and female.” (Genesis 1:27) Societal and theological distortions often lead us to overlook the important ways Christian see the virtues and roles of men and women as distinct. Christians affirm the equality of the sexes while rejecting the notion that they are identical in nature or purpose. Recognizing and cultivating the appropriate virtues for each sex and guiding students to live according to scriptural standards is essential. It is understood that some non-contact sports have designed co-ed teams such as golf or ultimate frisbee.
b.	Indicators i. The school offers guidance in manners and etiquette that fosters a cultural vocabulary that honors the biblical differences between men and women. ii. Male and female students exercise appropriate discretion in their relationships with one another. iii. The school’s dress code reinforces the differences between boys and girls. iv. In contact sports or PE, boys and girls do not compete in ways that might encourage boys to be rough with girls. v. In contact athletic competition, boys and girls participate on separate teams. vi. The school’s social and ceremonial events reinforce the differences between the sexes (e.g., protocol events, festivals).
c.	Documentation i. Publications: - o Examples of indicator-aligned policies in handbooks, manuals, training, activities, or communications.



	ii. Exhibits: ○ Operational documents outlining the philosophy or practice for dances, protocol events, dating, etc.
D.6. IN LOCO PARENTIS	Excellent schools honor the biblical principle that parents are the authority from which the school operates; therefore, the school works in concert with parents in educating their children.
a. Principle	God calls parents, specifically fathers, to raise their children in the education (<i>paideia</i>) of the Lord (Ephesians 6 , Deuteronomy 6). Therefore, a school's authority is delegated from parents, rather than the state or the church.
b. Indicators	i. In particular, fathers are held accountable for addressing school-related concerns. ii. Enrollment documents make this responsibility clear to parents. iii. The school policies state that by enrolling, parents are joining with the school and delegating authority. If parents are unwilling to support key aspects of school policy, the school advises them not to enroll.
c. Documentation	i. Publications: ○ Public documents or communication stating the school's <i>in loco parentis</i> position ii. Exhibits: ○ Citation of example(s) demonstrating the school's practice of this principle.



E.	STANDARD <i>for</i> CURRICULUM Excellent schools establish sufficient classical Christian curriculum requirements to achieve their mission. The content and goals of the entire curriculum are rich, challenging, and of high quality.
E.1.	ACADEMIC GOALS Excellent schools meet published goals for student achievement and advancement.
a.	Principle Publishing academic goals and demonstrating in concrete ways how the school meets these goals provides clarity for faculty, students, and parents, and bolsters confidence that the school faithfully educates its students
b.	Indicators i. Exit interviews conducted with graduates ii. Surveys of alumni are periodically accomplished iii. Surveys of parents that measure fulfillment of the school’s aspirational goals
c.	Documentation i. Publication: - o Portrait (or description) of a graduate A deep hope statement that the board, leadership, and parents pray will be a result of their education. ii. Exhibits: - o Survey results - o Other documents that communicate the academic goals for students. iii. Response: <i>Note: Do NOT include achievement test scores or high-school graduation requirements for this standard.</i>
E.2.	PROGRAM AND GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS Excellent schools have a public, well-organized, complete, and realistic school program that includes graduation requirements.



a.	Principle The school must specify a list of courses and credits required for students in each grade. Successful completion of these requirements culminates in the awarding of a diploma (or certificate) at the end of the 12th grade (or 6th or 8th grade). The required course of study must be well organized and publicized to parents and students in a clear and specific manner. A required course of study leading to a diploma is a distinguishing characteristic of schools. Schools publish detailed requirements for graduation, coursework, and accomplishment, consistent with the appropriate Diploma Recognition standard.
b.	Indicators i. Marketing materials for prospective parents explain the school’s course offerings. ii. Upper-level students meet with a staff member to discuss their academic progress. iii. Certificates of completion are not considered diplomas. iv. For each grade, the school has a list of required courses for full-time students that address the specific subject areas listed in E.4 Academic Program Requirements
c.	Documentation ● Publications: ○ A listing of all courses (course titles, course credits, and course descriptions) taught in the grammar and secondary, including specials and electives ○ High-school graduation requirements ○ School profile ● Exhibits: ○ Marketing materials that describe the academic program ● Response: ○ Explanation of the school’s diploma or certification tracks
E.3.	COMPLETE CURRICULUM Excellent schools establish sufficient classical Christian curriculum requirements to fulfill their mission. The curriculum’s content and goals are of high-quality and they challenge students. Additionally, the school clearly documents the entire curriculum within its curriculum guides.
a.	Principle A school’s curriculum guide must document what is taught in every class at each grade level. Such guides help ensure accountability in classroom instruction.



b.	Indicators i. The school publishes the curriculum guide. ii. Curriculum materials are detailed enough to guide classroom instruction. This is most often accomplished through the inclusion of objectives, though not excessively. iii. A documented sequence over time creates pacing for teachers within the curriculum. iv. Broad discussion questions are part of the written curriculum. v. Course objectives address virtues alongside knowledge and skills. Statements like “The student will know” and “The student will be able to” are neither the only nor the primary purpose of education.
c.	Documentation i. Publications: ○ Curriculum guides for all grammar and secondary school ii. Exhibits: ○ Western Canon booklist. iii. Response: ○ An explanation of how teachers regularly use the curriculum guide in lesson planning. ○ One example of how the written curriculum for a particular course is designed to fulfill a part of the vision for graduating students. This demonstrates a desire to plan academic goals that begin with graduates and work back to Kindergarten students—this is often called “backward, 12 through K curriculum planning.”
E.4. ACADEMIC PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS Excellent classical Christian schools have robust curricular elements required for all students; these elements include the teaching of phonics, logic, rhetoric, mathematics/quadrivium, science/natural history & philosophy, history, classical languages, great books, writing, poetry, Bible/theology, art, and music.	
a.	Indicators i. The school has a documented academic program that aligns with ACCS Diploma Recognition standards. <i>Notes: For specific details regarding this standard, see the Diploma Recognition section of this Handbook. Schools with special academic program needs may submit a request for a new category of diploma with the appropriate standards.</i>



E.5. ACADEMIC EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT

Excellent classical Christian schools regularly evaluate their academic program by administering an annual, appropriate, nationally recognized, standardized exam and other academic assessments that reflect classical pedagogy.

a. Principle

An objective measure of student progress provides confidence to students, teachers, and parents. Such a measure also assures the school's administration that teachers are meeting the school's established student-progress goals. While schools must test students at regular intervals, ACCS does not specify the regularity. Schools ought to assess students with humane methods that promote deep thinking through conversation, writing, and dialogue.

b. Indicators

- i. Schools articulate their reasons for testing their students.
- ii. Testing assesses verbal and quantitative reasoning, influenced by the classical method (sometimes called critical reading, math concepts, etc.).
- iii. The school uses the CLT3-8 (preferred), the CTP-5 (ERB), or another similar test.
- iv. The school administers tests at a schedule that allows for longitudinal analysis.
- v. The school may use any standardized test commonly available on the market, provided it does not direct the school's programs toward state standards like the Common Core.

c. Documentation

- i. Publications:
- ii. Exhibits:
 - Copies of *class score reports*, as received from the standardized testing service.
 - Schools may add their own internally created reports, being sure to identify what scores are reported and how results were calculated, and, if the school has learning targets, what scores are used to measure this growth.
- iii. Response:
 - Explanation of how the school utilizes test results. Are scores used to evaluate instruction, learning, or curriculum? Has the school completed an analysis to see how well the written curriculum, the taught curriculum, and the test curriculum match?

E.6. SAMPLE STUDENT WORK



	The school must provide sample student work along with the self-study.
a. Principle	This provides the visit committee with another means to evaluate the school.
c. Documentation	Include scanned copies of student work in these areas: i. Publications: ii. Exhibits: ○ Assignments that show instruction in phonics ○ Writing assignments from all levels, especially ones showing teacher corrections, including two from logic school and two from rhetoric school ○ Examples of poetry writing from all levels ○ Examples of tests from all levels (please include math, science, history, bible/theology, literature/English) ○ Assignments from Latin ○ Assignments from logic ○ Assignments from formal rhetoric (other than a thesis) ○ A senior thesis (from rhetoric) ○ Photos of student art work ○ Programs from concerts and/or fine arts nights (Optional)¹ iii. Response:



F.	STANDARD <i>for</i> FACULTY <i>and</i> INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES Excellent schools recognize the essential role of a teacher. Teachers are called to lead students in the way of godliness by their own learning, virtue, and piety. Students follow their teachers in the way of godliness by imitating their example, heeding their precepts, and embracing the knowledge they impart. (Deut 4:9 , Ps 78:1-8 , Luke 6:40 , 1 Corinthians 11:1 , Titus 2:7-8)
F.1.	FACULTY REQUIREMENTS Excellent schools ensure that each of their faculty members meet the school's written requirements for the position(s) that they hold.
a.	Principle A school must provide written requirements for hiring teachers that include either a specific job description or general standards of Christian faith, conduct, knowledge, and teaching ability relevant to the subjects the person will teach. These documents communicate that the school has considered the qualities inherent in successful teachers and applies these standards thoughtfully in its hiring practices.
b.	Indicators i. ACCS-accredited schools have often found greater success hiring inexperienced teachers who do not require re-training. It's very hard to successfully re-train a teacher. A preference for hiring long-term public school teachers with experience may suggest that the school misunderstands what makes classical Christian pedagogy distinct. ii. Teachers must be professing Christians who know the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior (John 3:3, 1 Peter 1:23), and they must agree with and adhere to the school's Statement of Faith as part of the qualifications for their position of employment. iii. Though not required for accreditation, schools often require full-time teachers to enroll school-age children at the school. School policies should allow exceptions on a case-by-case basis.
c.	Documentation i. Publications: ○ School's hiring policy (or documentation that defines what qualifies a full-time teacher). ii. Exhibit: ○ List of teachers, academic degrees, and classes taught.



	iii. Responses: ○ Explain whether or not the school conducts criminal background checks on applicants. ○ School's policy and requirements for mandatory enrollment of children of full-time employees (or rationale for not having such a requirement).
F.2. CLASS SIZE & TEACHER PREP TIME	Excellent schools assign teaching responsibilities so that the teaching load and the student-faculty ratio is consonant with its stated goals.
a. Principle	Schools have established class sizes for enhanced marketing, for facility limitations, or for tradition. ACCS recognizes that teaching loads and the adopted class size have a direct correlation on teacher salaries and therefore has no recommendations on these metrics.
b. Indicators	i. Student/teacher ratios for the school, maximum class size, and other limits on class size are published and followed. ii. The school allocates an appropriate amount of preparation time to teachers based on its capacity to provide such time and the number of classes each teacher is assigned to teach each day.
c. Documentation	i. Publication: ○ Policy on class size (or a published statement on class size used to market the school to prospective parents). ii. Exhibits: ○ Class rosters from the previous or current year. iii. Response: ○ Detail how many prep periods full-time grammar and secondary school teachers receive during the week.
F.3. BOOKS AND AD FONTES	Excellent schools foster a clear love and respect for reading and books throughout their programs, including Great Books and original sources.
a. Principle	Christians are people of The Book. ACCS schools place a high priority on the written word because God has done so in providing us with the Scriptures. The head administrator, as



	well as all teachers and staff, ought to clearly emphasize the importance of reading, while ensuring that students at each grade level have access to an abundance of high-quality books.
b. Indicators	i. Books in the school’s holdings are curated for quality. ii. Students can access a wide variety of literature in classrooms and/or libraries. iii. Students have ready access to “Great Books,” original source material, and reference texts.
c. Documentation	i. Publications: ii. Exhibits: - o Library collection guidelines - o List of books read by grade during the school year iii. Response: - o If the school has a summer reading program, provide a description. (Optional) <i>Note: This will be observed during the on-site visit.</i>
F.4. TEACHER DEVELOPMENT	Excellent schools maintain ongoing, well-established teacher development and certification programs that align with the ACCS vision. This includes taking advantage of ACCS-approved conferences, training, audio/video recordings, and other materials.
a. Principle	Although classical Christian education largely disappeared for over a century and a half, educators today are actively pursuing its revival. We are in the process of reconstructing an educational model that previous generations virtually erased, leaving no living memory to guide us. To this end, ongoing teacher training is crucial. It refines the art of teaching by honing necessary classroom skills and encouraging teachers to adopt approaches that diverge from their previous teaching experiences outside of ACCS. Training, combined with observation and evaluation, is essential to ensure that instruction distinctly follows the philosophy of classical Christian education.



b.	Indicators i. By the time of the school visit, the school has an ACCS-approved Teacher Certification program. (Submit the school’s plan to the Director of Accreditation.) ii. Teachers can describe the training program, level of certification, and how they participate in it. (See Standards for Teacher Certification) iii. The content of teacher training and development includes elements that are unique to classical Christian education.
c.	Documentation i. Publications: ii. Exhibits: ○ Schedules from teacher training meetings provided during summer orientation programs as well as during the school year. ○ Approved Teacher Certification plan ○ Status of teachers in the school’s plan. (Renewal only) iii. Responses: ○ Description of when faculty training is conducted. ○ Identification of major topics covered in recent faculty training.
F.5. PEDAGOGY Excellent schools employ teachers who practice effective pedagogy aligned with the principles of classical Christian education, including direct, dialectic, and mimetic instruction. Moreover, they apply methods drawn from historical classical Christian sources—derived from the Medieval Liberal Arts—to instill a Christian <i>paideia</i> in their students. Further standards are assessed through Diploma Recognition.	
a.	Principle ACCS accreditation places a high priority on assessing classroom instruction and student learning. True teachers do not merely dispense knowledge; they also inspire students to inquire and learn as they guide them through a field of study. The ACCS commits to educating students in the tradition of the Medieval Liberal Arts, called “classical Christian education,” by articulating and adhering to clear principles of instruction. You will find these in “Section Two: Pedagogical Resources” of the Standards for Teacher Certification.



b.	Indicators i. See “Section Two: Pedagogical Standards” of the Standards for Teacher Certification. <i>Note: In an accreditation review, school visit teams expect to see these principles in action, where they apply, as they observe classroom instruction. Team members understand that some of these principles do not naturally manifest in certain classroom interactions.</i>
c.	Documentation While documentation attests that a school has complied with this standard, more probative evidence arises when the visit team observes the school during the on-site visit. i. Publication: - o Lesson plan forms indicating how teachers employ these principles in routine planning. - o Actual lesson plans prepared by teachers and plans that best exemplify what an administrator expects from teachers. Include a week’s worth of lessons from each teacher selected; the administrator must select various teachers that represent a range of grade levels and subjects.
F.6. CLASSROOM OBSERVATION Excellent schools conduct regular formal and informal classroom observations of all teachers. In addition, they carry out separate written evaluations. Clear, written procedures define the process and frequency of both observations and evaluations.	
a.	Principle Regular supervision and classroom observation of teachers ensures that they continue to teach classically and adhere to the goals in the curriculum guides.
b.	Indicators i. Faculty members receive evaluations that include constructive observations in addition to areas where the teacher can improve. Evaluations provide a mix of praise and opportunities for future professional growth.
c.	Documentation i. Publication - o Policy that addresses the observation and supervision of teachers ii. Exhibits - o Classroom observation and teacher evaluation forms.



	○ Summary of specific faculty observations conducted during the previous year. iii. Responses ○ List the administrators responsible for regularly observing classroom instruction. Note the teaching load for each administrator listed. ○ Explain the school's process for communicating with teachers after a classroom observation.
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ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION

In addition to the documentation listed in each standard above needed for the self-study, the school visit team will also need to review the following documents on site:

- An alphabetized list of teachers who are teaching the day of the visit.
- A daily schedule for each day of the visit showing classes, times, room numbers, and teachers' names. (This is a particularly important document for the smooth conduct of the visit.)
- Current lesson plans are left on chairs in the back of classrooms.
- Three student files and three faculty files
- Copies of current teacher evaluation tool(s) and files where completed evaluations are maintained
- The last fiscal year's financial summary documents
- The current year budget, along with interim financial statements
- Board minutes for the previous six months. (This ensures the committee has meeting minutes from meetings held after the self-study was submitted.)

RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATIONS AND DISCREPANCIES

No later than one year after the receipt of the final report, the school must send a response for each recommendation included in the report. Schools are not required to implement the recommendations, however, they are expected to consider them and send a report on how the school decided to act on each recommendation.

RENEWAL ACCREDITATION SCHOOL VISIT

Before selecting the visit committee, ACCS will review where the head of school served during the previous accreditation cycle. They will also ask the school to identify the areas where it would benefit most from specific attention. For example, a school may request team members with expertise in strategic planning, marketing, or business management.



DIPLOMA RECOGNITION *for* ACCS-ACCREDITED SCHOOLS

WHAT IS DIPLOMA RECOGNITION?

The ACCS Recognizes the Diplomas from Accredited Members. This recognition is tied to the curricular and academic standards in the following section. However, because there are a growing number of programs under the umbrella of “classical Christian education”, we may choose to recognize various types of academic programs under different recognitions in the future. Our flagship diploma reflects the historic standards of the ACCS. As of 2025, every ACCS-accredited school must meet these flagship standards. However, in the future, we may accept proposals for diplomas that differ, such as for international schools, special needs schools, common arts schools, or those with unusually high academic programs. These may vary from our flagship standards, as long as they conform to our definition of “classical Christian education” and are approved by our accreditation commission. Such varied recognitions will be noted on the physical diploma awarded to the student.

Historically, accreditation in American schools did not include specific academic practices. Diplomas are the domain of State graduation requirements or program specific requirements, such as the International Baccalaureate. In the case of the ACCS, we require that every accredited school conform to one of our Diploma Recognition standards—at this time, the Flagship standards. These are the same standards we have used for many years. Through this program, we seek to clearly distinguish the value of ACCS-accredited schools from the broader category of Christian schools, including those that simply adopt the term “classical” in their name.

We anticipate that in time, Christian colleges will recognize the superior qualities of students holding the ACCS Recognized Diploma and will offer matriculation incentives that encourage parents to significantly value the ACCS Authorized Diploma as they make K-12 enrollment decisions.

All ACCS-accredited schools may issue an ACCS “Recognized Diploma.” Until such time as the ACCS approves additional diploma standards, all ACCS-accredited schools will offer our flagship diploma.

Below are the curriculum standards required for schools to award the ACCS Recognized Diploma. The only difference from our legacy Accreditation Program is that these have been separated out for clarity, and for the future use of additional programs. For continuity’s sake, we have retained the numbering convention from the Accreditation Handbook.



E.	STANDARD <i>for</i> CURRICULUM (ACCS DIPLOMA RECOGNITION)
E.4.	ACADEMIC PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS Excellent classical Christian schools have robust curricular elements required for all students; these elements include the teaching of phonics, logic, rhetoric, mathematics/quadrivium, science/natural history & philosophy, history, classical languages, great books, writing, poetry, Bible/theology, art, and music.
E.4.1.	PHONICS Instruction in reading by using phonics in the Grammar school.
a.	Principle Teaching children how to pronounce new words is essential for developing reading skills. “English is a phonetic language, which a child can quickly learn to read if he or she is taught the sounds of the various letters or combinations of letters” (Wilson, <i>Recovering the Lost Tools of Learning</i> , p. 31).
b.	Indicators i. The school uses a phonics-based reading curriculum in K, 1st, and 2nd grade. ii. Whole-word-based pedagogy is absent in grammar school. However, some “sight words” consistent with phonics pedagogy are expected.
c.	Documentation i. Publications: ii. Exhibits: iii. Responses: - o Identify the sections in the grammar curriculum guide that include phonics instruction. - o A description of the readers used in grades K-2.
E.4.2.	LATIN OR GREEK At least four years of Latin or Greek instruction, with at least two years in grades 7–12. <i>Note: A year is generally understood to be around 120 hours of class time with an instructor over the course of an academic year.</i>



a.	Principle For membership, ACCS requires that a school teach at least two years of Latin or Greek. Because ACCS accreditation has a higher bar than membership, accredited schools must require a minimum of four years of either language, with at least two of those years after the sixth grade. Familiarity with these languages helps students develop writing skills and facilitates their participation in the “great conversation” of Western civilization.
b.	Indicators i. Schools establish clear, purposeful goals for students to achieve in a foreign language after four years of instruction. ii. Students receive four years of Latin instruction, <i>or</i> iii. Students receive four years of Greek instruction, <i>or</i> iv. Students receive four years’ instruction in a combination of Latin and Greek with at least two years in grades 7-12.
c.	Documentation i. Publication: ii. Exhibits: ○ Class schedule showing Latin or Greek courses. iii. Responses: ○ An explanation of the school’s goals for its language program. ○ Identify the pages in the curriculum guides for the Latin or Greek courses. ○ Notes must specify the length of class periods for Latin or Greek courses and the number of days per week that they are taught.
E.4.3.	LOGIC AND RHETORIC Secondary academic programs provide at least one year each of formal logic and formal rhetoric. <i>Note: A year is generally understood to be around 120 hours of class time with an instructor over the course of an academic year.</i>
a.	Principle Logic and Rhetoric are two of the three Arts of the Trivium, and ought to influence the teaching methods utilized throughout the school. As discrete courses, Logic and Rhetoric provide students with some of the most powerful tools of learning.
b.	Indicators i. The school integrates logical and rhetorical tools into coursework and instruction. ii. There are discrete year-long courses of instruction in logic and rhetoric in the secondary academic program.



	iii. In addition to the time requirement cited here, it is expected that logical and rhetorical tools will be integrated into other courses. iv. A rhetorical thesis presentation is required for every graduate (not specifically a senior thesis).
c. Documentation	i. Publications: - o Written course curriculum. Identify the pages in the curriculum guides for the logic and rhetoric courses. ii. Exhibits: - o High-school graduation requirements address these courses. iii. Responses: - o Notes that specify the number of days per week and the length of class periods for logic and rhetoric courses.
E.4.4. WESTERN CIVILIZATION	Significant study in Western history and the canon of Western literature.
a. Principle	Because history reveals God’s created order in time and on earth, and because the ACCS mission “is both to promote the classical approach, and provide accountability for member schools to ensure that our cultural heritage is not lost again,” schools must teach children their Christian heritage, which has developed predominantly through the West.
b. Indicators	i. Children’s literature used in the classroom represents the classical canon for children. ii. The school prefers using primary sources over textbooks in the secondary school. iii. Secondary school students read a significant portion of the Western canon in translations as close to the original as practical. iv. Socratic and ethical discourse are evident in the treatment of great texts. v. The school defines the “Western Canon” by some accepted tradition (Harvard Classics, The Great Books of the Western World, generally accepted tradition, etc.)
c. Documentation	vi. Publications: vii. Exhibits: a. List the Western Canon texts read in grades 7–12.



	viii. Responses: ○ Identify at least some of the areas in the curriculum guides that relate to these subjects and describe when students receive training in them. ○ Philosophy of book selection—an explanation of the rationale for selecting the books for this standard.
E.4.5. WRITING	Training in writing (both prose and poetry), grammar, spelling, and composition.
a. Principle	ACCS expects that graduates will be capable communicators, which includes their ability to write. This requirement reflects the need for instruction at all levels of the school, from the early grades where students learn spelling and English grammar, to the secondary years where the school requires compositions. As students mature and develop independent thoughts and ideas, the school must teach them to communicate eloquently, peaceably, and persuasively.
b. Indicators	i. Prose and poetry are apparent throughout the school in an age-appropriate format. (progymnasmata). ii. Writing practices incorporate logical defense and the classical rhetorical form (reference progymnasmata, Cicero, Quintilian).
c. Documentation	i. Publications: ii. Exhibits: iii. Responses: ○ Identify the courses in the curriculum guides where prose writing is taught. ○ Identify the courses (or objectives) in the curriculum guides where poetry writing is taught.
E.4.6. BIBLE	Training in the Scriptures that fosters a well-integrated scriptural understanding of all subjects.
a. Principle	ACCS is committed to restoring a Christian culture grounded on the Bible. It is necessary that ACCS schools have courses that study the Bible, but that by itself is not sufficient. As this standard indicates, biblical integration is essential.



b.	Indicators i. The Scriptures permeate every course of instruction since all knowledge derives from Christ (Col. 2:3). ii. Teachers take advantage of the natural opportunities in their lessons to integrate Scripture, while respecting the plain context of the scriptural passage. It is not expected that every lesson observed by the visit committee will include scriptural integration.
c.	Documentation i. Publications: ii. Exhibits: a. List what Bible reading students complete in grades K-12. iii. Responses: - o Identify courses where students receive training in the Scriptures. - o Give one example of how the Scriptures are integrated into another subject. <i>Note: The visit committee will evaluate this during the site visit.</i>
E.4.7.	MATHEMATICS Training is required in general mathematics, arithmetic, algebra, and geometry, at a minimum; trigonometry is offered, but not required.
a.	Principle God is the source of order in the universe, and ACCS accredited schools expect their graduates to have proficiency with numbers. While mathematical rigor is encouraged, the specific course selections should align with the mission of the school. Note that both arithmetic and geometry are two of the Quadrivial Arts.
b.	Indicators i. The school requires students to complete the mathematics program through Algebra II and Geometry, and they have an option to take a trigonometry and/or a pre-calculus course. ii. Math teachers understand the unique contribution of the quadrivium in its relationship to the classical liberal arts.
c.	Documentation i. Publications: ii. Exhibits:



	iii. Response: - o Identify upper-school math scope and sequence with courses where students receive training in math, and they distinguish the required and elective courses.
E.4.8. SCIENCE	Training in general science, biology, chemistry, and an opportunity to take physics.
a. Principle	All order in creation derives from the Creator, and it is important to ensure students have a rudimentary understanding of how that creation is structured. These courses provide that level of knowledge and understanding. These subjects must be taught in a form consistent with natural philosophy and natural history, the classical tradition that orients the natural world to its relationship with the divine Creator's form and purpose, and thus supports a student's faith in God and confidence in Scripture.
b. Indicators	i. Students interviewed by the visit committee will demonstrate confidence in the truth of Scripture, especially as they express personal beliefs in creation. ii. The school identifies and refutes scientism (the belief that the scientific method is the path to ultimate truth) in favor of knowing God through His natural revelation.
c. Documentation	i. Publications: ii. Exhibits: - o Policy or guidelines instructing teachers in how to present creation iii. Response: - o Identify upper-school science scope and sequence with courses where students receive training in science. Distinguish the required and elective courses.
E.4.9. THEOLOGICAL INSTRUCTION	Training in Christian theology, Bible, and the historical confessions of the Christian faith.
a. Principle	Historically, theology has been the "queen of the Sciences." In other words, the study of God leads to the understanding and integration of all other knowledge. For this reason, classical Christian schools should train and teach in the historic tradition of theology. This training may include the narrower field of apologetics.



b.	Indicators i. Sound biblical and theological components are regular aspects of discussions in all subjects.
c.	Documentation i. Publications: ii. Exhibits: iii. Responses: - o Identify upper-school theology scope and sequence with courses where students receive training in theology or the historical confessions. - o Identify the pages in the curriculum guide for instruction in apologetics.
E.4.10.	ART During grammar and logic school, the curriculum includes some required instruction in the theory and practice of the visual arts. In rhetoric school, there are some required credits in fine arts (excluding music). <i>Note: “Visual art” refers to drawing, painting, sculpture, etc. “Fine arts” include the historic arts of painting, sculpture, architecture, and poetry, the performing arts of theater and dance, and modern forms such as film, photography, and design.</i>
a.	Principle ACCS is committed to Truth, Goodness, and Beauty. These traits are found in every course but are the very heart of this requirement. “Instruction in the arts” does not include art appreciation, which is considered “general instruction.” Art appreciation is embedded or included throughout the curriculum.
b.	Indicators i. Grammar and logic school students receive instruction in visual arts. ii. Rhetoric school students receive instruction in fine arts. iii. High-school graduation requirements include required art credits to ensure training in fine arts.
c.	Documentation i. Publications: ii. Exhibits: - o Class schedules for grammar school and logic school art instruction. - o Class schedules for rhetoric fine arts instruction.



	iii. Responses: ○ Identify visual arts training courses required during grammar and logic schools ○ Identify relevant courses found in the curriculum guide. ○ Identify elective choices available to secondary school students.
E.4.11. MUSIC	Within the grammar, logic, and rhetoric schools, the students receive required instruction in the theory and practice of music, whether instrumental or vocal. Instruction does not have to be a class.
a. Principle	ACCs is committed to Truth, Goodness, and Beauty. While these traits are found in every course, they are the very heart of this standard. “Instruction in the arts” does not include music appreciation, which is considered “general instruction,” and as such, is embedded or included throughout the curriculum.
b. Indicators	i. Every student receives instruction in vocal and/or instrumental music in grammar, logic, and rhetoric schools. ii. Students show evidence of vocal training when they sing
c. Documentation	i. Publications: ii. Exhibits: ○ Class schedules for grammar, logic, and rhetoric school music instruction. iii. Responses: ○ Identify relevant courses found in the curriculum guide. ○ Identify elective choices available to secondary school students. ○ List the music training courses required during each school year. ○ Times when students regularly sing or play instruments outside of class (e.g. chapel), must also be explained.



DIPLOMA RECOGNITION *for* CONCORDIS SCHOOLS

ACCEPTED MODELS

5-Day School

- Includes PE, Music, and Art at least one day each.

4-Day School

- Includes Music and Art at least one day each.
- Encourages families to incorporate PE and other electives at home.

3-Day School

- Includes Music and Art at least one day each.
- Hybrid Model – Collaborative education between school and home.
 - Core Model – Enrichment provided by families, paired with at-home practice and preparation work.
 - Core+ Model – Enrichment provided either by families at home or through school-based electives.
 - Encourages families to include enrichment activities on home days.

2-Day School

- Includes Music at least one day.
 - Hybrid Model – Collaborative education between school and home.
 - Encourages families to include enrichment activities on home days.



E.	STANDARDS <i>for</i> CURRICULUM (CONCORDIS DIPLOMA RECOGNITION)
E.4.	ACADEMIC PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS Excellent classical Christian schools have robust curricular elements required for all students; these elements include the teaching of phonics, logic, rhetoric, mathematics/quadrivium, science/natural history & philosophy, history, classical languages, great books, writing, poetry, Bible/theology, art, and music.
E.4.1.	PHONICS Instruction in reading by using phonics in the Grammar school.
a.	Principle Teaching children how to pronounce new words is essential for developing reading skills. “English is a phonetic language, which a child can quickly learn to read if he or she is taught the sounds of the various letters or combinations of letters” (Wilson, <i>Recovering the Lost Tools of Learning</i> , p. 31).
b.	Indicators i. The school uses a phonics-based reading curriculum in K, 1st, and 2nd grade. ii. Whole-word-based pedagogy is absent in grammar school. However, some “sight words” consistent with phonics pedagogy are expected.
c.	Documentation i. Publications: ii. Exhibits: iii. Responses: ○ Identify the sections in the grammar curriculum guide that include phonics instruction. ○ A description of the readers used in grades K-2.
E.4.2.	LATIN OR GREEK At least four years of Latin or Greek instruction, with at least two years in grades 7-12. <i>Note: A year is generally understood to be around 120 hours of class time with an instructor over the course of an academic year.</i>



a. Principle	For membership, ACCS requires that a school teach at least two years of Latin or Greek. Because ACCS accreditation has a higher bar than membership, accredited schools must require a minimum of four years of either language, with at least two of those years after the sixth grade. Familiarity with these languages helps students develop writing skills and facilitates their participation in the “great conversation” of Western civilization.
b. Indicators	i. Schools establish clear, purposeful goals for students to achieve in a foreign language after four years of instruction. ii. Students receive four years of Latin instruction, <i>or</i> iii. Students receive four years of Greek instruction, <i>or</i> iv. Students receive four years’ instruction in a combination of Latin and Greek with at least two years in grades 7-12.
c. Documentation	i. Publication: ii. Exhibits: - o Class schedule showing Latin or Greek courses. iii. Responses: - o An explanation of the school’s goals for its language program. - o Identify the pages in the curriculum guides for the Latin or Greek courses. - o Notes must specify the length of class periods for Latin or Greek courses and the number of days per week that they are taught.
E.4.3. LOGIC AND RHETORIC	Secondary academic programs must integrate formal logic and rhetoric into each year of logic and rhetoric programs.
a. Principle	Logic and Rhetoric are two of the three Arts of the Trivium, and ought to influence the teaching methods utilized throughout the school. When integrated, Logic and Rhetoric provide students with some of the most powerful tools of learning.
b. Indicators	i. The school integrates logical and rhetorical tools into coursework and instruction. ii. Secondary teachers demonstrate their logic and rhetoric instruction through magnum opus unit assessments for each unit.



	iii. A rhetorical thesis presentation is required for every graduate (not specifically a senior thesis) unless an exception is made by a council of three or more members. .
c. Documentation i. Publications: - Written course curriculum. Identify the pages in the curriculum guides curriculum guide pages for Logic and Rhetoric objectives. ii. Exhibits: - High school graduation requirements specifying these courses, either in terms of credits or through course study descriptions iii. Responses: - Explanation of how Logic and Rhetoric are integrated into each unit plan across six years. - Details on the number of instructional days per week and class period length for integrated humanities courses that incorporate Logic and Rhetoric.	
E.4.4. WESTERN CIVILIZATION Significant study in Western history and a canon of Western literature.	
a. Principle Because history reveals God’s created order in time and on earth, and because the ACCS mission “is both to promote the classical approach, and provide accountability for member schools to ensure that our cultural heritage is not lost again,” schools must teach children their Christian heritage, which has developed predominantly through the West.	
b. Indicators i. Children’s literature used in the classroom represents the classical canon for children.. ii. The school prefers using primary sources over textbooks in the secondary school. iii. Secondary school students read a significant portion of the Western canon in translations as close to the original as practical. iv. Socratic and ethical discourse are evident in the treatment of great texts. v. The school defines the “Western Canon” by some accepted tradition (Harvard Classics, The Great Books of the Western World, generally accepted tradition, etc.)	
c. Documentation i. Publications: ii. Exhibits: List the Western Canon texts read in grades 7–12.	



	iii. Responses: ○ Identify at least some of the areas in the curriculum guides that relate to these subjects and describe when students receive training in them. ○ Philosophy of book selection—an explanation of the rationale for selecting the books for this standard.
E.4.5. WRITING	Training in writing (both prose and poetry), grammar, spelling, and composition.
a. Principle	ACCS expects that graduates will be capable communicators, which includes their ability to write. This requirement reflects the need for instruction at all levels of the school, from the early grades where students learn spelling and English grammar, to the secondary years where the school requires compositions. As students mature and develop independent thoughts and ideas, the school must teach them to communicate eloquently, peaceably, and persuasively.
b. Indicators	i. Prose and poetry are apparent throughout the school in an age-appropriate format. (progymnasmata). ii. Writing practices incorporate logical defense and the classical rhetorical form (reference progymnasmata, Cicero, Aristotle, Quintilian).
c. Documentation	i. Publications: ii. Exhibits: iii. Responses: ○ Identify the courses in the curriculum guides where prose writing is taught. ○ Identify the courses (or objectives) in the curriculum guides where poetry writing is taught.
E.4.6. BIBLE	Training in the Scriptures that fosters a well-integrated scriptural understanding of all subjects.
a. Principle	ACCS is committed to restoring a Christian culture grounded on the Bible. It is necessary that ACCS schools have courses that study the Bible, but that by itself is not sufficient. As this standard indicates, biblical integration is essential.
b. Indicators	



	i. The Scriptures permeate every course of instruction since all knowledge derives from Christ (Col. 2:3). ii. Teachers take advantage of the natural opportunities in their lessons to integrate Scripture, while respecting the plain context of the scriptural passage. It is not expected that every lesson observed by the visit committee will include scriptural integration.
c. Documentation	i. Publications: ii. Exhibits: a. List what Bible reading students complete in grades K-12. iii. Responses: - o Identify courses where students receive training in the Scriptures. - o Give one example of how the Scriptures are integrated into another subject. <i>Note: The visit committee will evaluate this during the site visit.</i>
E.4.7. MATHEMATICS	Training is required in general mathematics, arithmetic, algebra, and geometry, at a minimum; trigonometry is offered, but not required.
a. Principle	God is the source of order in the universe, and ACCS accredited schools expect their graduates to have proficiency with numbers. While mathematical rigor is encouraged, the specific course selections should align with the mission of the school. Note that both arithmetic and geometry are two of the Quadrivial Arts.
b. Indicators	i. The school requires students to complete the mathematics program through Algebra II and Geometry, and they have an option to take a trigonometry and/or a pre-calculus course. ii. Math teachers understand the unique contribution of the quadrivium in its relationship to the classical liberal arts.
c. Documentation	i. Publications: ii. Exhibits: iii. Response: - o Identify upper-school math scope and sequence with courses where students receive training in math, and they distinguish the required and elective courses.



E.4.8. SCIENCE	Training in general science, biology, chemistry, and an opportunity to take physics.
a. Principle	All order in creation derives from the Creator, and it is important to ensure students have a rudimentary understanding of how that creation is structured. These courses provide that level of knowledge and understanding. Wherever practical, these subjects must be taught in a form consistent with natural philosophy and natural history, the classical tradition that orients the natural world to its relationship with the divine Creator's form and purpose, and thus supports a student's faith in God and confidence in Scripture.
b. Indicators	i. Students interviewed by the visit committee will demonstrate confidence in the truth of Scripture, especially as they express personal beliefs in creation. ii. The school identifies and refutes scientism (the belief that the scientific method is the path to ultimate truth) in favor of knowing God through His natural revelation.
c. Documentation	i. Publications: ii. Exhibits: - o Policy or guidelines instructing teachers in how to present creation iii. Response: - o Identify upper-school science scope and sequence with courses where students receive training in science. Distinguish the required and elective courses.
E.4.9. THEOLOGICAL INSTRUCTION	Training in Christian theology, Bible, and the historical confessions of the Christian faith.
a. Principle	Historically, theology has been the “queen of the Sciences.” In other words, the study of God leads to the understanding and integration of all other knowledge. For this reason, classical Christian schools should train and teach in the historic tradition of theology. This training may include the narrower field of apologetics.
b. Indicators	i. Sound biblical and theological components are regular aspects of discussions in all subjects.



c.	Documentation i. Publications: ii. Exhibits:: iii. Responses: ○ Identify upper-school theology scope and sequence with courses where students receive training in theology or the historical confessions. ○ Identify the pages in the curriculum guide for instruction in apologetics.
E.4.10.	ART During grammar and logic school, the curriculum includes some required instruction in the theory and practice of the visual arts. In rhetoric school, there are some required credits in fine arts (excluding music). <i>Note: “Visual art” refers to drawing, painting, sculpture, etc. “Fine arts” include the historic arts of painting, sculpture, architecture, and poetry, the performing arts of theater and dance, and modern forms such as film, photography, and design.</i>
a.	Principle ACCS is committed to Truth, Goodness, and Beauty. These traits are found in every course but are the very heart of this requirement. “Instruction in the arts” does not include art appreciation, which is considered “general instruction.” Art appreciation is embedded or included throughout the curriculum.
b.	Indicators i. Grammar and logic school students receive instruction in visual arts. ii. Rhetoric school students receive instruction in fine arts. iii. High-school graduation requirements include required art credits to ensure training in fine arts.
c.	Documentation i. Publications: ii. Exhibits: ○ Class schedules for grammar school and logic school art instruction. ○ Class schedules for rhetoric fine arts instruction. i. Responses: ○ Identify visual arts training courses required during grammar and logic schools ○ Identify relevant courses found in the curriculum guide. ○ Identify elective choices available to secondary school students.



E.4.11. MUSIC	Within the grammar, logic, and rhetoric schools, the students receive required instruction in the theory and practice of music, whether instrumental or vocal. Instruction does not have to be a class.
a. Principle	ACCS is committed to Truth, Goodness, and Beauty. While these traits are found in every course, they are the very heart of this standard. “Instruction in the arts” does not include music appreciation, which is considered “general instruction,” and as such, is embedded or included throughout the curriculum.
b. Indicators	i. Students receive instruction in music in grammar, logic, and rhetoric schools ii. Students show evidence of vocal training when they sing
c. Documentation	i. Publications: ii. Exhibits: - o Class schedules for grammar, logic, and rhetoric school music instruction. iii. Responses: - o Identify relevant courses found in the curriculum guide. - o Identify elective choices available to secondary school students. - o List the music training courses required during each school year. - o Times when students regularly sing or play instruments outside of class (e.g. chapel), must also be explained.