



## Middle States Commissions on Elementary and Secondary Schools

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### OPERATION OF THE COMMISSIONS

**Section 1: The Commissions' Policies.** To the extent possible and practical, the policies adopted by the Commission on Elementary Schools and by the Commission on Secondary Schools shall set forth the same policies and procedures. However, a separate Policy Handbook will be kept for each Commission. All policies shall serve to promote democratic and responsible governance of the Commission and constitute the principles by which the Commission and its President exercise leadership.

- Policies adopted by the Commission on Elementary Schools and Commission on Secondary Schools shall be written and coded and be maintained by the President.
- The Policies of the Commission on Elementary Schools and the Policies of the Commission on Secondary Schools shall be made available to Commissioners, accredited and candidate institutions, and other interested parties on the Commissions' website.
- Recommendations for new policies or revisions to current policies may be made by accredited and candidate institutions, the Commissions' staff, members of the Commissions' advisory committees, and Commissioners. All recommendations must be submitted to the Policy and Planning Committee of the Commission on Elementary Schools and the Policy and Planning Committee of the Commission on Secondary Schools for review and recommendation for action by the Commissions.

#### Review of the Commission's Policies.

- The Policy and Planning Committee of the Commission on Elementary Schools and the Policy and Planning Committee of the Commission on Secondary School shall plan and conduct a formal and complete review of the Commissions' policies at least once every five years. The purpose of the review is to ensure that policies adequately meet the needs of the Middle States Association and the Commissions on Elementary and Secondary Schools.
- The Policy and Planning Committee of the Commission on Elementary Schools and the Policy and Planning Committee of the Commission on Secondary School shall conduct a review of a portion of the Commissions' policies at each meeting of the Commissions.

Authority to Create or Revise Policies for Federal Petition Purposes. The President and the Commission on Secondary Schools' Executive/Nomination Committee shall have the authority to make minor, non-substantive changes to the Commission's policies when such changes are required for the Commission on Secondary Schools to maintain its recognition by the U.S. Secretary of Education or one of the civil authorities in the regions served by the Commission. Such changes shall be reported to the Commission, in writing, at the next regularly scheduled Commission meetings.

### Section 2: Operation of the Commissions.

Commissions' Meetings: The Commissions shall schedule and conduct a minimum of two meetings per year that are open only to Commissioners, the Commissions' staff, and invited guests. Members of the Middle States Association's Board of Trustees and officers of the Middle States Association may attend Commission meetings upon prior notice to the President of the Commissions at least 15 days in advance of a meeting.

Quorum: At all meetings of the Commissions, the presence of a majority of the currently elected Commissioners shall a quorum to transact business. Any act of a majority present at a meeting

at which there is a quorum shall be the act of the full Commission, except as may be otherwise required by law, by the Commission's policies, or the Association's Bylaws.

Proxies Not Allowed for Commission Meetings. Only Commissioners in physical attendance are eligible to vote at Commission meetings. Voting by proxy is not permitted.

Telephone Meetings Permitted.

- a) Members of a Commission may participate in committee and/or special purpose meetings via a conference telephone call, videoconferencing, or similar communications modalities by means of which all persons participating in the meeting can hear each other. Such participation shall constitute the presence of a Commissioner at such meeting.
- b) Participation by any means other than being physically present at the location at which a meeting is held is not permitted for Commission meetings unless said meeting is called as a teleconference meeting, in which all members are using phones or similar communications equipment.

Mail/E-mail Ballots. The Commission make take official actions by mail or signed e-mail ballot if all members of a Commission consent to such action.

Presiding Official. Meetings of each Commission shall be presided over by the Chair of the Commission, or, in the Chair's absence, by the Vice Chair/Chair Elect, or, in the Vice Chair/Chair Elect's absence, the Past Chair or other member of a Commission's Executive/Nomination Committee.

Parliamentary Authority. Meetings of the Commissions shall be conducted in accordance with parliamentary procedures as delineated in *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised*.

**Section 3: Compensation.** Officers and members of the Commissions shall not be compensated for any service related to the Commissions' business, except for reimbursement of travel and lodging expenses related to Commission business.

**Section 4: Training and Orientation.** Members of the Commissions shall participate in the following training and orientation activities prior to attending any meeting of a Commission or any of its Committees, Commissioners elected to their first term of office shall participate in a New Commissioners' Orientation, which shall include, but not limited to, documentation to cover the following topics—

- 1) History of the Middle States Association, Association organizational structure, CESS Staff organizational structure
- 2) Composition of the Committees and Membership of the Commissions
- 3) Rosters for MSA-CESS Staff and Commissions
- 4) Scope and Categories of MSA-CESS Accredited Institutions
- 5) The Standards for Accreditation and their role in the Accreditation Decision
- 6) Self-Study and Accreditation Protocols, Programs of Distinction
- 7) Review Process for Accreditation Actions
- 8) MSA-CESS Policies
- 9) Accredited Institution Membership Statistics
- 10) Cooperative Accreditation: Agreements, Agencies, and procedures
- 11) Procedures for Conflict of Interest
- 12) Financial operations of the Commissions and budgetary information