



STANDARDS FOR ACCREDITATION

SCHOOL EDITION | 2016

**MIDDLE STATES ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES AND SCHOOLS
COMMISSIONS ON ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

3624 Market Street | 2 West | Philadelphia, PA 19104

Telephone: 267.284.5000 | FAX: 215.662.0957 | info@msa-cess.org | www.msa-cess.org

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Introduction	1
The Standards for Accreditation for Schools	
<i>Mission</i>	3
<i>Governance and Leadership</i>	4
<i>School Improvement Planning</i>	7
<i>Finances</i>	8
<i>Facilities</i>	10
<i>School Organization and Staff</i>	12
<i>Health and Safety</i>	15
<i>Educational Program</i>	17
<i>Assessment and Evidence of Student Learning</i>	21
<i>Student Services</i>	24
<i>Student Life and Student Activities</i>	27
<i>Information Resources</i>	29
Addendum for Pennsylvania Schools	31
Glossary of Terms	32

INTRODUCTION

The Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools (MSA) was established in 1887 and is a nongovernmental, nonprofit, peer-administered organization. MSA provides leadership in developing and recognizing quality in education for its member schools throughout the United States and in nearly 100 countries around the world.

Together, the elementary and secondary Commissions of the Middle States Association—operating as the Commissions on Elementary and Secondary Schools—serve institutions providing early age education through secondary and post-secondary non-degree granting programs. The Commissions on Elementary and Secondary Schools are recognized by the U.S. Department of Education and provide accreditation services to US State Department Office of Overseas Schools.

THE ROLE OF STANDARDS IN THE ACCREDITATION PROCESS

The Middle States Standards for Accreditation are qualitative statements that reflect research-proven practices for schools pursuing continuous school improvement. The Middle States Standards have several important functions in the accreditation process. Most importantly, they serve as a mechanism for improving a school's capacity to produce the levels of student performance that are both desired and expected by its community of stakeholders. Because they are based on research and reflect proven practices, they serve as a qualitative guide to expectations for an accredited school. The Standards are not designed to make all schools look alike. The Middle States accreditation process respects the individual nature and character of each school. The diversity of Middle States member schools reflects this important principle. Although it is required that all schools meet the same Standards for Accreditation, there is sufficient flexibility within the Standards so that different schools can demonstrate they meet the Standards in different ways.

The Standards serve as the primary basis upon which the Commissions make accreditation decisions. The Commissions offer a variety of protocols for self-study and accreditation, each of which begins with the requirement that a school meets the Standards for Accreditation. Then, building on the requirements of the Standards, a school proceeds to establish a plan for growing or improving student performance and the school's capacity to produce the levels of student performance desired and expected by its community of stakeholders.

The Standards for Accreditation and Indicators of Quality are numbered for ease of reference only. No relative weight or other significance should be attributed to those numbers.

THE ROLE OF INDICATORS OF QUALITY IN THE ACCREDITATION PROCESS

Indicators of Quality have been developed for each Standard. The Indicators amplify a Standard and show possible ways that a school can demonstrate that a particular Standard is met. Indicators provide greater clarity regarding proven practices related to each Standard. Although it is expected that all accredited schools will meet the Standards, not all Indicators will apply to or be appropriate for each school. It is imperative that the use of Indicators respects the individual integrity of each school and that no attempt to conform a school's operation to these Indicators be made.

A number of the Standards for Accreditation include sub-sets of Indicators that are applicable to different types of schools and to schools with special programs or services. For example, the Governance and Leadership Standard includes a set of Indicators for independent/non-public schools and a different set of Indicators for schools in public school districts, archdiocesan/diocesan systems, and other school organizations with a central office staff. For some of the Standards, there are also Indicators for schools that have early age programs and Indicators for schools that deliver some or their entire educational program using a distance modality. Each school uses only the Indicators that are applicable and appropriate for the school.



MISSION

STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION

The school has a mission that conveys clearly and concisely the school’s vision of a preferred future for the school community and its expectations for student learning. The mission is consistent with the community’s ethical norms and demonstrates respect for persons of all races, creeds, and cultures. The mission serves as the basis for daily operational and instructional decision-making as well as strategic planning. It is developed and periodically reviewed using a process that considers input by stakeholders of the school and is aligned with the needs of the community(ies) the school serves.

INDICATORS OF QUALITY FOR ALL SCHOOLS

The school’s statement of mission is:

- 1.1 Clearly aligned with the school’s beliefs and profile of the graduate.
- 1.2 Communicated widely, understood and supported by the students, their families, and (if appropriate) the school’s community of stakeholders.
- 1.3 Developed using a process that considered input by appropriate stakeholders of the school.
- 1.4 Reviewed periodically to determine its effectiveness in communicating the school’s purposes and vision.

INDICATORS OF QUALITY FOR FAITH-BASED SCHOOLS¹

The school’s religious identity is:

- 1.5 Integrated into its school-wide goals and objectives.
- 1.6 Visible in symbols and artifacts throughout the school.

¹ The use of the Faith-Based Indicators for this and the other Standards for Accreditation by faith-based schools is voluntary and not required, unless their use is directed by the head of a parent school system. The Faith-Based Indicators allow faith-based schools, if they desire, to include in their self-study and accreditation process Indicators of Quality that address unique characteristics of and expectations for schools whose mission and educational program are defined wholly or in part by their particular faith.



GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP

STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION

The school is chartered, licensed, and/or authorized by the appropriate civil authority(ies) and is in compliance with all applicable statutes, ordinances, and regulations of all civil authorities of the jurisdiction(s) in which the school operates. There are no legal or proprietary ambiguities in the ownership and control of or responsibility for the school.

The school's governing body and leadership act ethically and consistently to ensure an atmosphere of mutual respect, purposeful effort, and a productive environment for teaching and learning while demonstrating adherence to the school's mission. The governing body and leadership maintain timely and open communication with the school's community of stakeholders. The governing body and leadership provide the vision that drives strategic planning and day-to-day operations. They ensure the integrity, effectiveness, and reputation of the school by establishing policies, providing necessary resources, and ensuring the quality of the school's educational program.

INDICATORS OF QUALITY FOR ALL SCHOOLS

The school's governing body ensures that the school:

- 2.1 Is in compliance with all applicable statutes, ordinances, and regulations of all civil authorities of the jurisdiction(s) in which the school operates.
- 2.2 Has no legal or proprietary ambiguities in ownership, control, or responsibility.
- 2.3 Expresses partnerships and any corporate linkages in ownership/governance as enforceable agreements.
- 2.4 Is provided with effective leadership, support, and continuity, including succession planning to ensure stability of the school's leadership.
- 2.5 Is provided with leaders that possess the appropriate qualifications, experience, and competencies for their position.
- 2.6 Is provided with the sufficient qualified personnel to deliver its programs, services, and activities.

The school's governing body ensures that it:

- 2.7 Is focused on selecting, evaluating, and supporting the head of the school, policy development, planning, assessing the school's performance, and ensuring the availability of adequate resources to accomplish the school's mission.
- 2.8 Uses a clearly defined performance appraisal system for the head of the school. The appraisal is conducted with the knowledge and participation of the head of the school.
- 2.9 Thinks and acts strategically, reflecting on its decisions and the consequences of its actions.
- 2.10 Refrains from undermining the authority of the school's leadership to conduct the daily operation of the school.

- 2.11 Works cooperatively with the school's leadership to establish and maintain clear, written policies and procedures that are consistent with the school's mission, are implemented at all times, and reviewed regularly.
- 2.12 Has and implements written policies and/or procedural guidelines that define for the governing body:
 - Its proper roles and responsibilities;
 - Qualifications for its members;
 - Its composition, organization, and operation;
 - Terms of office for its members; and
 - Provisions for identifying and selecting new board members when vacancies occur.
- 2.13 Implements a process for reviewing/revising its policies regularly.
- 2.14 Evaluates systematically and regularly its own effectiveness in performing its duties.
- 2.15 Provides appropriate opportunities for education of its members, including orientation and training sessions so that all members understand their responsibilities and roles.
- 2.16 Conducts a regular schedule of meetings that is communicated to the school's community of stakeholders.
- 2.17 Includes members that represent constituencies served by the school.
- 2.18 Maintains appropriate and constructive relations with the school's leadership, staff, students, families, the community, and with each other in the interest of serving the needs of the students.
- 2.19 Recognizes the accomplishments of staff members and students.
- 2.20 Adheres to appropriate guidelines concerning confidentiality in communications.

The school's leadership:

- 2.21 Is accountable to the governing body and is responsible for ensuring the school's students achieve the expected levels of achievement.
- 2.22 Maintains a relationship with the school's governing body characterized by mutual trust and cooperation.
- 2.23 Ensures that all school programs and activities are adequately and appropriately planned, supervised, resourced, and staffed with qualified personnel.
- 2.24 Provides a program of professional development based on the needs of the school and staff identified in the school's growth and improvement process.
- 2.25 Ensures that professional and support staff members stay well informed about educational developments.
- 2.26 Undertakes operational, long range, and strategic planning aimed at accomplishing the school's mission and goals.
- 2.27 Stays well informed of and implements proven practices identified in educational research and literature.
- 2.28 Maintains appropriate and constructive relations with families, students, the staff, the community, and with each other in the interest of serving the needs of the students.
- 2.29 Adheres to appropriate guidelines concerning confidentiality in communications.

INDICATORS OF QUALITY FOR FAITH-BASED SCHOOLS

The school's governing body and leadership:

- 2.30 Articulate and model the religious tenets of the school.
- 2.31 Maintain the religious identity of the school as a priority.
- 2.32 Use the school's religious values and identity to inform its policies, procedures and decisions.
- 2.33 Accept the authority of the sponsoring religious institution.
- 2.34 Engage the school's community of stakeholders in setting direction and planning for the future of the school as a faith-based institution.
- 2.35 Include an assessment of candidates' understanding of and commitment to the religious beliefs and mission of the school when hiring the school's leadership and members of the staff.
- 2.36 Promote respect and collaboration among all members of the school's "faith" community.
- 2.37 Give appropriate attention to building a respectful and collaborative "faith" community among the faculty and staff.

INDICATOR OF QUALITY FOR SCHOOLS THAT DELIVER ALL OR PART OF THEIR EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM BY A DISTANCE MODALITY

The school's leadership:

- 2.38 Includes personnel with the appropriate qualifications, experience, and competencies to lead an institution that uses a distance modality(ies) to deliver all or part of its educational program and/or services.

INDICATOR OF QUALITY FOR PROPRIETARY SCHOOLS

The proprietor/leader:

- 2.39 Possesses knowledge and experience in fields of study offered by the school or ensures that others within the institution's leadership possess that knowledge and experience.

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLANNING

STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION

The school plans strategically and continuously to grow and improve its students' performance and the school's capacity to produce the levels of student performance desired and expected by its community of stakeholders. The school's strategic plan is aligned with and supports achievement of its mission. The school uses a collaborative process to develop and implement its strategic plan for growth and improvement and ensures that the plan includes professional development activities the staff needs to implement the plan and achieve its goals. The school improvement planning is monitored, periodically assessed and revised as needed.

INDICATORS OF QUALITY FOR ALL SCHOOLS

The governing body and leadership ensure that the school:

- 3.1 Develops a strategic plan for growth and improvement that is approved by the governing body (if appropriate) and supported by the school's community of stakeholders.
- 3.2 Bases its strategic plan on longitudinal data regarding the achievement and performance of the school's students and the school's capacity to produce the levels of student achievement and performance expected by its community of stakeholders.
- 3.3 Communicates regularly to its community of stakeholders information about the school's planning process, strategic plan, and the results being achieved by implementing the plan.
- 3.4 Provides members of its community of stakeholders with appropriate opportunities to provide input into its strategic planning for growth and improvement.
- 3.5 Takes into consideration the school's capacities in terms of time, energy, and resources when planning new initiatives, setting goals, and developing action plans.
- 3.6 Guarantees that its action plans address all areas of the school's programs, services, operations, and resources that are relevant to the school's mission and the strategic plan's goals.
- 3.7 Monitors implementation of its strategic plan and revises it as needed to ensure it is producing the intended results.

INDICATOR OF QUALITY FOR FAITH-BASED SCHOOLS

The governing body and leadership ensure that the school:

- 3.8 Maintains as a priority in all planning activities the spiritual life of the school and its community.



FINANCES

STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION

The school has financial resources that are sufficient to provide its students with the educational program defined in the school's mission and strategic plan. Financial resources are stable, and indications are they will continue to be stable for the foreseeable future. The school uses business practices that are ethical and follow accepted budgeting and accounting principles. The practices promote confidence in the school's ability to manage its fiscal and material resources in a responsible manner. The school dedicates its financial resources to implementing its educational program, services, activities, and operations.

INDICATORS OF QUALITY FOR ALL SCHOOLS

The governing body and leadership ensure that the school:

- 4.1 Is free of any contingent financial liabilities or on-going litigations that could affect the school's ability to continue operation.
- 4.2 Maintains levels of income and expenditures that are in appropriate balance.
- 4.3 Has and implements written policies and procedures that require the governing body and leadership to exercise prudent control over the school's finances and all financial operations.
- 4.4 Entrusts the overseeing and conducting of its financial and business operations only to those who possess the appropriate qualifications.
- 4.5 Develops short- and long-range financial plans to ensure financial resources are available to deliver its educational program and services.
- 4.6 Submits official financial records of the school such as periodic financial audits, external reviews that are conducted by qualified external agencies, or other evidence of financial viability and stability.
- 4.7 Responds appropriately to the results and recommendations of financial audits or reviews.
- 4.8 Gives stakeholders appropriate opportunities to provide input into financial planning.
- 4.9 Provides the staff with appropriate opportunities to participate in determining financial priorities for curriculum and instructional needs.
- 4.10 Informs families enrolling students in the school about any financial obligations for attending the school.
- 4.11 Sets tuitions and fees, if applicable, that are related to the content of the school's educational program, the length of study, and equipment and supplies required for learning.
- 4.12 Has and implements written, reasonable, and equitable tuition, collection, and refund policies.
- 4.13 Carries appropriate insurance coverage that is adequate for protecting the interests and operations of the school (e.g., business interruption, casualty, property, liability insurance for employees and the governing body/owner).
- 4.14 Makes prudent use of resources available through development activities, grants, foundations, and other partnerships.
- 4.15 Conducts advancement efforts that are supported by the school's leadership, staff, parents, and alumni.

INDICATORS OF QUALITY FOR FAITH-BASED SCHOOLS

The school's governing body and leadership ensure that the school:

- 4.16 Has the financial resources necessary to support and enhance the religious nature of the school.
- 4.17 Considers the religious values of the school when making decisions regarding the use of its financial resources.

FACILITIES

STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION

The school provides facilities that are safe, clean, and well maintained and that are appropriate and adequate to achieve the school's mission. The facilities provide a physical environment that supports delivery of the school's educational program, services, and activities, and the ability of students to achieve the levels of learning and performance expected of them. The facilities are inspected regularly for effective operation and are in compliance with all applicable health and safety codes of the civil jurisdiction(s) within which the school is located.

INDICATORS OF QUALITY FOR ALL SCHOOLS

The governing body and leadership ensure that the school:

- 5.1 Provides sufficient and appropriate facilities for all aspects of the school's educational programs, activities, and services including:
 - 5.1.a Instructional areas/classrooms
 - 5.1.b Administrative offices
 - 5.1.c Conference rooms
 - 5.1.d Residential Boarding (students and faculty)
 - 5.1.e Health Services
 - 5.1.f Student activities
 - 5.1.g Student services
 - 5.1.h Safe and secure storage of school property, equipment, official records, and materials (e.g., cleaning supplies and chemicals).
 - 5.1.i Safe and secure storage of student belongings
- 5.2 Provides an effective and aesthetically pleasing learning environment which supports the educational goals and effective teaching.
- 5.3 Includes in its budget the resources needed for facilities, equipment, and materials to support its educational program, services, and activities.
- 5.4 Conducts regular and systematic assessments of the adequacy of its facilities, equipment, and materials.
- 5.5 Plans for, funds, and schedules regular preventative measures, repairs, and maintenance of its facilities, equipment, and materials.
- 5.6 Considers the capacities of its facilities and equipment before adopting new programs and in its strategic planning.
- 5.7 Has sufficient systems in place to monitor and provide appropriate air quality throughout its facilities.
- 5.8 Has adequate and appropriate lighting throughout its facilities.
- 5.9 Has sufficient space for entering, exiting, and traffic flow within its facilities.
- 5.10 Makes safe drinking water available for the students, the staff, and visitors to the school.

- 5.11 Is in compliance with the requirements of all appropriate civil authorities in which the school is located for fire safety and occupancy.

INDICATORS OF QUALITY FOR SCHOOLS WITH EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROGRAMS

The governing body and leadership ensure that the learning environment:

- 5.12 Includes interest centers that have materials in an orderly and accessible arrangement.
- 5.13 Has sufficient space for the number of children involved in the early childhood learning activities.
- 5.14 Includes appropriately sized furniture designed to assure accessibility to children.

SCHOOL ORGANIZATION AND STAFF

STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION

The school's organization facilitates achievement of its purposes and core values as expressed in its mission and successful implementation of its educational program, services, and activities. Members of the administrative, instructional, and support staffs are qualified, competent, and sufficient in number to provide a high quality educational experience as defined by the school's mission. Staff members possess the qualifications required by the civil authority in which the institution operates to administer and teach the program(s) to which they are assigned. Staff members are evaluated regularly based on clear expectations for performance and are provided with professional development experiences that address areas in which staff members need to grow and/or improve. The school's leaders, staff and community stakeholders demonstrate collegial and collaborative relationships.

INDICATORS OF QUALITY FOR ALL SCHOOLS

The governing body and leadership ensure that the school's organization promotes:

- 6.1 A sense of collegiality, high expectations for performance, trust, support, recognition for accomplishments and contributions, and pride in their school.
- 6.2 Commitment to the school, dedication to their work, and pride in the outcome of their efforts.
- 6.3 Professional satisfaction and good general morale.

The governing body and leadership ensure that the school's organization:

- 6.4 Is described by a logical and clear table of organization that includes written job descriptions and that specifies levels of responsibility and reporting relationships.
- 6.5 Defines clearly in writing roles, responsibilities, expectations, and reporting relationships of its staff that support a high quality educational program and experiences for the school's students.

The governing body and leadership ensure that the school has and implements written policies and/or procedural guidelines for ensuring a positive work environment, including:

- 6.6 The day-to-day operation of the school.
- 6.7 Determining adequate compensation, arriving at reasonable workloads and acceptable working conditions, and defining just and fair treatment for all members of its staff.
- 6.8 Evaluating staff members' performance.
- 6.9 Handling complaints/ grievances by members of the staff.
- 6.10 Orienting and mentoring of new staff members.
- 6.11 Appropriate orientation and supervision for service providers not employed by the school.
- 6.12 Due diligence conducted in the hiring process to ensure that all members of the staff are eligible and continue to be eligible to work with children.

- 6.13 Due diligence conducted to ensure that employees of providers of contracted services are eligible and continue to be eligible to work with children.
- 6.14 Due diligence conducted to ensure that volunteers are eligible and continue to be eligible to work with children.

The governing body and leadership ensure that the school’s staff:

- 6.15 Is led by designated and qualified leaders who provide coordination, supervision, support, and direction for the school’s educational program, services, and activities.
- 6.16 Has a scheduled program of regular systematic professional training (for staff, contractors, and volunteers) on student safeguarding, child abuse prevention, identification, intervention, and reporting.
- 6.17 Is assigned to work based on the members’ education, preparation, experience, expertise, and commitment to the school’s success.
- 6.18 Is evaluated regularly based on professional standards and expectations that have been communicated to the staff in advance.
- 6.19 Is evaluated with the knowledge of the staff member and reported to the staff member in writing as well as verbally.
- 6.20 Is provided with an opportunity to discuss performance evaluations with the evaluator(s) and the ability to appeal evaluations to a designated level of leadership above the evaluator(s).
- 6.21 Is provided opportunities to offer input into the content of professional development experiences.
- 6.22 Is encouraged by the leadership to affiliate with professional organizations.
- 6.23 Feels safe in the school.
- 6.24 Enforces the student code of conduct fairly and uniformly.
- 6.25 Demonstrates a commitment to, pride in, and support for the school by participating in its activities, and promoting its mission.

INDICATORS OF QUALITY FOR SCHOOLS WITH EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS

The governing body and leadership ensure that the early childhood program:

- 6.26 Has and implements personnel policies that include an appraisal system and professional development programs that focus explicitly on staff behaviors that are to be encouraged in the classroom such as teacher interactions with children, acknowledgement of age-appropriate development, and developmentally appropriate instructional practices.
- 6.27 Seeks to achieve applicable teacher and/or staff-to-children ratios.

INDICATORS OF QUALITY FOR SCHOOLS THAT PROVIDE ALL OR PART OF THEIR EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM BY A DISTANCE MODALITY

The governing body and leadership ensure that:

- 6.28 Members of the faculty who deliver the educational program and associated tasks via a distance modality are appropriately qualified and experienced.

The governing body and leadership ensure that the program:

- 6.29 Includes developing age-appropriate relationships between students and between students and their teachers.

INDICATORS OF QUALITY FOR FAITH-BASED SCHOOLS

The governing body and leadership ensure the school:

- 6.30 Portrays an identifiable integration of faith, life, and culture.

The governing body and leadership ensure that:

- 6.31 The school's programs of study, activities, athletics, codes of conduct, and discipline actions reflect the religious values expressed in the school's foundational documents.
- 6.32 Appropriate attention is given in all school programs and activities to values and traditions that demonstrate and reinforce the school's religious nature.
- 6.33 Members of the faculty are provided with opportunities to advance their understanding of the religious beliefs and foundation documents of the school.
- 6.34 Formal and informal opportunities are provided for the spiritual development of the faculty and staff members.
- 6.35 Regular professional development opportunities are provided for the spiritual development of the faculty and staff as spiritual leaders in the school community.
- 6.36 The religious studies program for students is consistent with the mission of the school and the sponsoring institution.
- 6.37 Opportunities for prayer and/or expressions of faith are integrated into the school's curricula and daily activities.

***** FOR SCHOOLS LOCATED IN PENNSYLVANIA, PLEASE REFER TO ADDENDUM AT THE END OF STANDARDS FOR ADDITIONAL REQUIRED INDICATORS – 6.38 – 6.41*****

HEALTH AND SAFETY

STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION

The school provides a safe, orderly, and healthy environment for teaching and learning that meets the health and safety requirements of the civil jurisdiction(s) in which the school operates. The school has and implements policies and/or procedural guidelines to ensure the health and safety of students, the staff, and visitors to the school. The school has and implements plans for responding to emergencies and crises.

INDICATORS OF QUALITY FOR ALL SCHOOLS

The governing body and leadership ensure that the school:

- 7.1 Regularly reviews and updates its written policies and/or procedural guidelines governing the school's provisions for the health and safety of its students, staff, and visitors.
- 7.2 Regularly reviews and updates its plans for responding to emergencies and crises.
- 7.3 Has and implements written procedures and functional equipment with which to communicate during fire and other emergencies, to summon assistance, and to evacuate the school's facilities.
- 7.4 Conducts drills of its emergency and crisis plans regularly, maintains written records of drills, and based on the outcomes of the drills, assesses the effectiveness of its plans and revises them accordingly.
- 7.5 Provides appropriate and adequate health care and safety for its students during the school day and makes provisions for appropriate health care and safety at school functions that take place away from the school's premises.
- 7.6 Provides appropriate training for all staff members on implementing the school's emergency and crisis plans, including but not limited to handling accidents and illnesses, universal precautions for preventing the spread of infectious diseases, and child abuse prevention and reporting.
- 7.7 Has and implements written policies and/or procedural guidelines to manage the storage and administration of student medications.
- 7.8 Has and implements a system to account for the whereabouts of its students at all times.
- 7.9 Has and implements policies and/or procedural guidelines for maintaining and sharing medical records and health information of students and members of the staff in compliance with applicable laws.
- 7.10 Provides staff with up-to-date and relevant health, wellness, and safety information and practices pertaining to the school's students and staff.
- 7.11 Has effective relationships with community organizations that are able to provide appropriate support, advice, and services related to health, safety, and child protection.
- 7.12 Includes in its educational program and activities opportunities for students to develop knowledge, attitudes, and practices necessary for personal wellness and a healthy lifestyle.
- 7.13 Has an effective system to control access to the school by visitors and other non-school personnel.
- 7.14 Implements policies, procedures and/or programs to promote awareness, prevention, and responsiveness to issues related to the social and emotional well-being of the students and staff.

INDICATORS OF QUALITY FOR SCHOOLS WITH BOARDING

The governing body and leadership ensure that the school:

- 7.15 Provides appropriate and adequate health care and safety for its students and staff in residential boarding, including:
 - 7.15.a. Written procedures and functional equipment with which to communicate during fire and other emergencies, to summon assistance, and to evacuate the dormitories.
 - 7.15.b. Conducting drills of its emergency and crisis plans regularly and maintaining written records of drills.
 - 7.15.c. Provision of appropriate health care and safety for students and dormitory staff residing in dormitories at all times.
 - 7.15.d. Provision of appropriate training for all dormitory staff members on implementing the dormitory's emergency and crisis plans, including but not limited to handling accidents and illnesses, universal precautions for preventing the spread of infectious diseases, and child abuse prevention and reporting.
 - 7.15.e. An effective system to control access to the dormitories by visitors and other non-school personnel.

INDICATORS OF QUALITY FOR SCHOOLS WITH EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS

The governing body and leadership ensure that the school:

- 7.16 Provides care for infants that is consistent with current professional practice, especially with respect to sleeping, bottle-feeding, diapering, sanitation, nurturing, and daily interactions.
- 7.17 Regularly sanitizes surfaces where children eat and sleep and items they can put into their mouths.
- 7.18 Consults regularly with health professionals regarding the health risks of working with young children.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION

The school's educational program consists of carefully planned and well-executed programs of study that are based on appropriate content and learning standards, and instructional methods and assessments of student learning that reflect current research and proven practices in learning and teaching. The educational program is aligned with the school's mission, approved by the governing body, and sufficiently financed and supported. The educational program is designed so that all students can achieve at the levels desired by the school's community of stakeholders.

INDICATORS OF QUALITY FOR ALL SCHOOLS

The governing body and leadership ensure that the school:

- 8.1 Has and implements policies and/or procedural guidelines and criteria for regularly reviewing and revising programs of study/courses, developing new programs of study/courses, and eliminating programs of study/courses that are determined to be no longer effective or that no longer contribute effectively to achieving the school's mission and goals for student learning.
- 8.2 Publishes for all students and their families an overview of the school's educational program and its programs of study and seeks input as appropriate.

The governing body and leadership ensure that the school's educational program includes:

- 8.3 Programs of study that consist of a scope and sequence, knowledge and skills to be learned, expectations for the levels of student learning and performance, instructional methods, and assessment methods.
- 8.4 Instruction in the subject areas of language arts and literature (including early language development and literacy skills, speaking, writing, and listening communication skills), mathematics, the sciences, social sciences, world languages, visual and performing arts, health, and physical education.
- 8.5 Instruction in appropriate and effective uses of information technology for learning and teaching and provides opportunities for application of knowledge and skills learned.
- 8.6 Experiences that promote students' critical thinking, reasoning, problem-solving skills, study skills, and the transfer of learning to other curricular areas and real-life issues.
- 8.7 Opportunities for students to develop social skills, such as self-control and a sense of individual and group responsibility in interactions with adults and peers.
- 8.8 Opportunities that promote global awareness and understanding of diverse cultures and lifestyles.

The governing body and leadership ensure that the school's educational program:

- 8.9 Is delivered using documented curriculum guides that are current, functional, available to and used by teachers, and that reflect current research and proven practices.
- 8.10 Defines expected outcomes for student learning and performance in terms of knowledge, understandings, attitudes, skills, and habits to be demonstrated.

- 8.11 Expresses expected student learning outcomes in terms that can be understood by the students.
- 8.12 Is delivered in a variety of learning settings (e.g., individual, small group, large group).
- 8.13 Considers the ages, cultures, and varying levels of ability of students when setting levels of expected student learning and performance and ensures students are prepared for a successful transition to the next educational level.
- 8.14 Is articulated both horizontally and vertically and coordinated among all levels of the school.

INDICATORS OF QUALITY FOR SCHOOLS WITH EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS

The governing body and leadership ensure that the school’s early childhood educational program:

- 8.15 Considers as part of its educational program, everything that happens during the day, including while children play and explore, eat, interact, toilet, take walks or field trips, engage in planned experiences, and are involved in transitions such as arrival, clean-up, and departure.
- 8.16 Supports language development.
- 8.17 Provides a balance of opportunities for mastery and challenge.
- 8.18 Includes activities that are designed to prompt exploration, support growing independence, and minimize disruptions/distractions.
- 8.19 Includes age- and content-appropriate interest activities in all classrooms.
- 8.20 Treats all spaces in the school in which students may be present as part of the learning environment.
- 8.21 Supports positive interactions between peers that are developmentally appropriate.

The governing body and leadership ensure that the school’s early childhood educational program provides:

- 8.22 An integrated approach to children’s social, emotional, physical, cognitive, and language development.
- 8.23 A good balance of child-initiated and teacher-initiated activities in the daily plan.
- 8.24 Individualized instruction for infants and young toddlers primarily and, as appropriate, activities in small groups.
- 8.25 A balance of quiet and active times and flexibly incorporates learners’ natural routines into the rhythm of the day.
- 8.26 Daily indoor and outdoor play with a balance between large-muscle and small-muscle as well as organized and unstructured experiences.
- 8.27 Development of early language and literacy skills through interactive activities, such as: conversation, storytelling, singing, poetry, finger plays, games, puppets, pretend play, shared reading of picture books, and other meaningful learning experiences.
- 8.28 Opportunities for increasing independence in use of materials and equipment and in self-care.
- 8.29 Structured and unstructured opportunities for children’s active involvement with people and materials.
- 8.30 Spontaneous learning and activities that build on children’s repertoires and curiosity.
- 8.31 Learning areas designed for individual and group exploration and growth that support challenge and consolidation in the relevant domains of development.

- 8.32 Materials for gross and fine motor activities.
- 8.33 Developmentally appropriate learning resources for outdoor activities.
- 8.34 Daily opportunities for creative expression.
- 8.35 A variety of books that are accessible to all age groups every day.

INDICATORS OF QUALITY FOR SCHOOLS WITH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PROGRAMS

The governing body and leadership ensure that the school’s elementary-level educational program:

- 8.36 Places emphasis on the development of cognitive, psychomotor, and affective skills, plus the knowledge and competencies that establish the basis for greater understanding.
- 8.37 Provides an integrated approach to children’s social, emotional, physical, cognitive, and language development.
- 8.38 Provides individualized instruction and, as appropriate, activities in small groups.
- 8.39 Provides daily indoor and outdoor play with a balance between large-muscle and small-muscle as well as organized and unstructured experiences.
- 8.40 Provides experiences that prepare students for successful transition to middle and secondary school settings.

INDICATORS OF QUALITY FOR SCHOOLS WITH MIDDLE SCHOOL PROGRAMS

The governing body and leadership ensure that the school’s middle-level educational program:

- 8.41 Provides activities and experiences that assist early adolescents in identifying their aptitudes and interests.
- 8.42 Provides experiences that prepare students for successful transition to the secondary school setting.

INDICATORS OF QUALITY FOR SCHOOLS WITH SECONDARY SCHOOL PROGRAMS

The governing body and leadership ensure that the school’s secondary-level educational program provides:

- 8.43 Students with the knowledge, skills, and habits of mind required for college and career readiness.
- 8.44 Experiences that prepare students for successful transition to postsecondary education and/or the world of work.
- 8.45 Students with opportunities to apply the knowledge, skills, and habits they have learned to real-life issues and problems.

INDICATORS OF QUALITY FOR SCHOOLS THAT DELIVER ALL OR PART OF THEIR EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM BY A DISTANCE MODALITY

The governing body and leadership ensure that the school’s educational program:

- 8.46 Facilitates student interaction (synchronous and asynchronous) with teachers and other students through a variety of means as an essential characteristic of the educational program.
- 8.47 Informs students and their families (if appropriate) about any aspects of the educational program that are created or delivered by an organization other than the school.
- 8.48 Sets the expectations for student learning and performance that are achievable through a distance modality.
- 8.49 Uses textbooks and/or other learning and instructional materials that are developed by authors qualified in distance education techniques.
- 8.50 Includes instruction in the skills students need to use the distance modality effectively and efficiently.
- 8.51 Provides opportunities for students to develop social skills for relating to and working with other students and adults.

INDICATORS OF QUALITY FOR FAITH-BASED SCHOOLS

The governing body and leadership ensure that the school's educational program:

- 8.52 Reflects appropriately the religious nature of the school.
- 8.53 Integrates religious teachings into all areas of the educational program.
- 8.54 Includes teachings that are grounded in the beliefs, values, and traditions of the sponsoring faith-community.
- 8.55 Defines clearly the objectives for faith development and community service programs for students that reflect the mission of the school.
- 8.56 Makes religious education for students a priority in scheduling, budgeting, and planning.
- 8.57 Is a central concern of all of the school's leaders, faculty members, and staff.
- 8.58 Is age and developmentally appropriate.
- 8.59 Includes health education that is consistent with the religious beliefs and values of the sponsoring faith-community.
- 8.60 Includes opportunities for students to apply their learning beyond the classroom (e.g., community service projects, internships, job shadowing).
- 8.61 Provides regular faith-based experiences that foster the religious formation of the students.

ASSESSMENT AND EVIDENCE OF STUDENT LEARNING STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION

The school has a program for assessing student learning and performance that is consistent with the school's mission. The program is based on current research and proven practices and is aligned with the school's educational and instructional programs. The assessment program systematically collects and rigorously analyzes quantifiable and observable evidence of student learning and performance and growth using multiple, valid, and reliable assessments that are respected by the school's community of stakeholders. The school expects all students to learn and demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and habits of mind required in the educational program. Students are learning and performing at the levels expected, or the school has and is implementing a plan to raise learning and performance to the expected levels.

INDICATORS OF QUALITY FOR ALL SCHOOLS

The governing body and leadership ensure that the school:

- 9.1 Has and implements written policies or procedural guidelines that govern the program for assessing student learning and performance.
- 9.2 Reports the results of its assessment of students' learning and performance regularly, accurately, and clearly to the school's community of stakeholders.
- 9.3 Has leadership and a staff that are committed to, participate, and share in accountability for student learning and performance.

The governing body and leadership ensure that the staff analyzes the results of assessing student learning with appropriate frequency and rigor by:

- 9.4 Evaluating the effectiveness of the school's curricula, instructional methods, professional development program, and student services.
- 9.5 Monitoring learning by individual students as well as cohorts of students as they move through the school.
- 9.6 Making appropriate comparisons regarding the learning of its students and that of comparable local, state, and/or national groups of students.

The governing body and leadership ensure that the school:

- 9.7 Maintains appropriate records of students' learning and performance.
- 9.8 Uses generally accepted standards for the control, use of, and access to records of student learning and performance that meet the requirements of laws governing confidentiality of student records.
- 9.9 Communicates its assessment policies and program to the school's community of stakeholders.
- 9.10 Communicates regularly with families regarding students' progress in learning.
- 9.11 Collaborates with families to develop, if necessary, appropriate strategies to assist the students to learn and perform at the expected levels.

The governing body and leadership ensure that the school uses assessments to measure student learning that:

- 9.12 Are based on current and reliable research on child development and growth.
- 9.13 Provide data that can inform decisions regarding allocating resources for the components of the school's educational program.
- 9.14 Can be used for making recommendations to families whose children may benefit from further assessment/evaluation.
- 9.15 Enable students to monitor their own learning progress and teachers to adapt their instruction to students' learning styles.
- 9.16 Reflect understanding of different styles of learning.
- 9.17 Enable the staff to identify students that might have special needs for learning and performing at the expected levels as early as possible.
- 9.18 Are augmented by information and insights about students' learning and performance from students' families.

INDICATOR FOR QUALITY FOR SCHOOLS WITH EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS

The governing body and leadership ensure that:

- 9.19 Children are observed by teachers on a daily basis using a systematic and objective process for formal and informal observation and documentation.
- 9.20 Assessments used to measure student learning and development are aligned with age-appropriate early childhood standards for learning.

INDICATORS OF QUALITY FOR SCHOOLS THAT DELIVER ALL OR PART OF THEIR EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM BY A DISTANCE MODALITY

The governing body and leadership ensure that the school:

- 9.21 Has and implements written policies and/or procedural guidelines that ensure students fulfill program requirements personally and with appropriate assistance.
- 9.22 Has and implements written policies and/or procedural guidelines to ensure the identity of the students when assessing learning and performance electronically or by means other than in a location in which the student is in the presence and under the direct supervision of a staff member.
- 9.23 Requires that members of the staff who evaluate student assignments are qualified in the fields they are evaluating.
- 9.24 Uses data on student learning and performance and completion rates to evaluate and revise, as needed, curriculums, instructional methods, and educational services.

INDICATOR OF QUALITY FOR FAITH-BASED SCHOOLS

The governing body and leadership ensure that the school:

9.25 Includes in its assessments of students' learning and performance knowledge and application of the school's religious beliefs and values.

STUDENT SERVICES

STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION

The school provides student services that are effective, appropriate, and that support student learning and achieving the school's mission. The services are well-planned and well-delivered, and they are an integral part of and contribute to the school's educational program. Services are delivered by qualified personnel, sufficiently financed, and evaluated periodically for their effectiveness. Services comply with any requirements of the civil authorities of the jurisdiction(s) in which the school is located.

INDICATORS OF QUALITY FOR ALL SCHOOLS

The governing body and leadership ensure the school provides student services that:

- 10.1 Address developing students' academic and social skills, personal attributes, and career awareness and planning skills.
- 10.2 Are the shared responsibility of the school's counselors, leadership, teachers, and other staff members.
- 10.3 Address students' emotional and social needs as well as academic needs.
- 10.4 Use the results of assessing student learning to identify the need to provide additional services or revise/eliminate current services.
- 10.5 Extend into and support services provided by community agencies.
- 10.6 Are documented by maintaining appropriate records, including student data that are current, comprehensive, and readily available for use by the staff.
- 10.7 Use the results of follow-up studies of graduates and other former students to help determine the effectiveness of the school's educational program and student services.
- 10.8 Include an orientation program for new students and their families to share the school's mission, educational program, services, policies, and expectations.
- 10.9 Make available to students' families information about child development and learning.

Transportation Services—The governing body and leadership ensure that the school:

- 10.10 Has and implements written policies or procedural guidelines to ensure the safety of students when being transported to and from school and school events by means provided by the school.
- 10.11 Requires that all transportation personnel of the school or those contracted by the school are appropriately trained.
- 10.12 Is in compliance with the safety requirements of all appropriate civil authorities in which the school is located for transportation services provided or contracted by the school.
- 10.13 Has and implements procedures for the safe arrival and departure of students from the school.

Food Services—The governing body and leadership ensure that:

- 10.14 Student dining areas are functional and hygienic.

- 10.15 Meals provided by the school meet generally accepted nutritional standards.
- 10.16 Information about nutritional values of the foods is available to students and their families.
- 10.17 Appropriate training is provided to food services providers.
- 10.18 Food services personnel meet the health requirements of all civil authorities of the jurisdictions in which the school is located.
- 10.19 Food service facilities are inspected regularly and meet the health and safety requirements of all of the jurisdictions in which the school is located.

Services for Students with Special Needs—The governing body and leadership ensure that the school:

- 10.20 Has and implements written policies or procedural guidelines to identify and address the education of students with special needs.
- 10.21 Provides or refers families to appropriate related services and/or accommodations to meet students' special needs.
- 10.22 If applicable, is in compliance with all requirements of the jurisdictions in which the school is located related to students with special needs.

Admissions and Placement—The governing body and leadership ensure that the school has and implements written policies or procedural guidelines governing:

- 10.23 Admission to the school.
- 10.24 Placement of students in the appropriate components of the educational program and at the appropriate levels.

The governing body and leadership ensure that the school:

- 10.25 Informs applicants for enrollment and their families of the mission of the school, the nature and extent of the educational program and services available, tuition and fees (if applicable), school policies, and expectations for satisfactory student performance.
- 10.26 Employs only marketing materials, statements, and representations related to the school's educational programs, services, activities, and resources that are clear, accurate, current, and non-discriminatory.

INDICATORS OF QUALITY FOR SCHOOLS THAT DELIVER ALL OR PART OF THEIR EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM BY A DISTANCE MODALITY

The governing body and leadership ensure that the school:

- 10.27 Advises prospective students and their parents/guardians prior to admission about the self-motivation and commitment needed for successful learning by the distance modality and the technical competence required to participate and learn in the educational program.
- 10.28 Provides support in student use of distance modalities at the levels expected.
- 10.29 Actively encourages students to start, continue, and finish their programs of study within the time prescribed.

- 10.30 Has and implements written policies or procedural guidelines to evaluate students' previous academic work and to provide fair and consistent awarding of credit for previous studies or work experience.

INDICATORS OF QUALITY FOR FAITH-BASED SCHOOLS

The governing body and leadership ensure that the school:

- 10.31 Provides student services that reflect the school's religious identity and mission.
- 10.32 Provide student services that are aligned with the school's mission, enrich the academic program, and support the development of student and family life.
- 10.33 Provides student services that are delivered cooperatively by counseling and campus ministry personnel.
- 10.34 Has and implements written admissions and placement policies or procedural guidelines that are consistent with the school's religious values and traditions.

STUDENT LIFE AND STUDENT ACTIVITIES

STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION

The school provides non-discriminatory student experiences. A balance of academic, social, co- or extra-curricular and service experiences are maintained. Student experiences are designed to foster intellectual, cultural, and social growth and physical health and wellness. Experiences provide opportunities for student leadership and social interaction, encourage development of student interests, and, when appropriate, family involvement. Experiences are adequately financed, periodically reviewed for their effectiveness, and appropriate for the school's mission.

INDICATORS OF QUALITY FOR ALL SCHOOLS

The governing body and leadership ensure that:

- 11.1 All students are offered opportunities through student experiences to build their skills in handling responsibility, taking initiative, leadership, cooperation, and self-direction.
- 11.2 The school provides non-discriminatory student experiences that are age- and developmentally appropriate and that supplement and enhance the school's educational program.
- 11.3 Activities are varied, developmentally appropriate, and enhance the educational program.
- 11.4 Students, the staff, families, and the community are provided with appropriate opportunities to offer input regarding the school's student activities.
- 11.5 Staff members, parents, and other volunteers who lead student activities are approved by the school's leadership, suitably qualified, and provide appropriate supervision to students.
- 11.6 The school recognizes student accomplishments, contributions, and responsibilities in meaningful ways.
- 11.7 Interactions among the students, staff, and volunteers are characterized by respect, fairness, and understanding.
- 11.8 Students and staff understand and abide by the school's Code of Conduct.
- 11.9 An understanding and acceptance of the high expectations the school holds for learning and citizenship.
- 11.10 Students and staff have a sense of being trusted, supported, and recognized for their accomplishments and contributions.
- 11.11 Staff and students have pride in their school.
- 11.12 Activities are adequately financed, periodically reviewed for their effectiveness, and appropriate for the school's mission.

INDICATORS OF QUALITY FOR SCHOOLS WITH RESIDENTIAL BOARDING

The governing body and leadership ensure that:

- 11.13 The school has a purposeful and meaningful residential boarding program.

- 11.14 The school assists students to develop healthy relationships with adults in loco parentis and with other students.
- 11.15 Appropriate provisions are made for student privacy, recreation, and religious practice.
- 11.16 Continuous and responsible supervision by qualified adults is provided for all boarding students, including evenings, weekends, and periods when classes are not in session.

INDICATORS OF QUALITY FOR SCHOOLS THAT DELIVER ALL OR PART OF THEIR EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM BY A DISTANCE MODALITY

The governing body and leadership ensure that:

- 11.17 Students are provided with a program of co-curricular or extra-curricular programs/activities or the school actively encourages and promotes students' involvement in such activities in their community.
- 11.18 Includes regular opportunities for students to interact with each other and with their teachers and other adults in settings other than the distance modality.

INDICATOR OF QUALITY FOR FAITH-BASED SCHOOLS

The governing body and leadership ensure that:

- 11.19 All student activities and athletics include opportunities for the faith formation of the students.

INFORMATION RESOURCES

STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION

The school's information resources and personnel are appropriate and adequate in scope, quantity, and quality to facilitate achieving the school's mission and delivery of its educational programs. The resources are accessible to all students and the staff for use in learning and teaching and to broaden and extend their knowledge and skills. Appropriate instruction is offered to the students and the staff on the appropriate, ethical, and most effective uses of the information resources. Information resources are current and functional.

INDICATORS OF QUALITY FOR ALL SCHOOLS

The governing body and leadership ensure that:

- 12.1 The school has and implements written policies and/or procedural guidelines for the ethical and appropriate use for acquiring information and using information resources.
- 12.2 Members of the staff and students are provided with appropriate opportunities to offer input into the types, quality, and format of the information resources provided.
- 12.3 Members of the staff and students are provided with training for the appropriate, ethical, and most effective uses of the information resources.

The governing body and leadership ensure that information resources are:

- 12.4 Age and developmentally appropriate.
- 12.5 Properly organized and maintained for ready access and use by students and the staff.
- 12.6 Reviewed periodically for relevancy, currency, and alignment with the school's curricula and instructional programs.
- 12.7 Appropriately supported with funding from the school's budget.
- 12.8 Managed by members of the staff who are sufficient in number and appropriately qualified to provide effective services to the students and staff.
- 12.9 Supportive of the school's plan for growth and improvement of student performance.

INDICATORS OF QUALITY FOR SCHOOLS WITH EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS

The governing body and leadership ensure that learning resources:

- 12.10 Are provided in an effective learning environment that supports the education goals for students and effective teaching for faculty.
- 12.11 Include intentional, appropriate supports for language, literacy, and numeracy development.
- 12.12 Promotes early development of a love of reading for enjoyment and as a foundation for future learning.

INDICATORS OF QUALITY FOR SCHOOLS THAT DELIVER ALL OR PART OF THEIR EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM BY A DISTANCE MODALITY

The governing body and leadership ensure that:

- 12.13 The school's information resources are adequate to deliver the educational program by the distance modality.
- 12.14 Students using the distance modality have access to the information resources required to achieve the learning goals set for their programs of study.
- 12.15 The school provides students with reasonable technical support for the software and hardware required to learn using the distance modality.

ADDENDUM

INDICATORS OF QUALITY FOR ALL PENNSYLVANIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS, PRIVATE SCHOOLS AND THEIR CONTRACTORS' EMPLOYEES WHO WORK IN DIRECT CONTACT WITH CHILDREN, AND STUDENT TEACHER CANDIDATES.

The governing body and leadership ensure that the school has and implements written policies and procedures that:

- PA 6.38 In accordance with Act 24 of 2011 and Section 111 of the Pennsylvania School Code, require all applicants for employment with the institution, including employees of independent contractors but excluding employees who do not have direct contact with students, and student teacher candidates to undergo the following background checks prior to being hired or contracted:
 - a. Pennsylvania State Police Request for Criminal Records Check. Applies to individuals hired as of January 1, 1986;
 - b. PA Department of Public Welfare Child Abuse History Clearance; and
 - c. Federal Criminal History Record Information (CHRI) in a manner required by the Department of Education.

- PA 6.39 In accordance with Act 24 of 2011, require all employees as of September 29, 2011 who have not been subject to a previous background check to:
 - a. provide assurances on form PDE-6004 that they have not been previously arrested or convicted of a Section 111(e) offense; or
 - b. if they refuse to submit form PDE-6004, are required to submit a current background check under Section 111.

- PA 6.40 Require the institution to review applicants' required background check reports prior to their being hired or contracted to determine the fitness of the individual to work in a position in which s/he will have contact with children.

- PA 6.41 Require the institution to keep on file copies of the required background check reports for all staff hired or contracted on or after April 1, 2007.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

The following terms used in the Standards for Accreditation have specific meanings as defined here:

Academic Standards – Expectations for what students are expected to know and to be able to do with what they know in the content areas included in the educational program.

Accreditation Standards – Qualitative statements that reflect research-proven practices for schools.

Community of Stakeholders – Individuals or groups that have a stake in the future of the school; may be school leaders, teachers, members of the staff, students, families, governing bodies, community members, alumni, business partners, and others.

Distance Education – Education that uses, as its primary mode of instructional delivery, an alternative to traditional classroom-based instruction, such as via the Internet, mailed correspondence, or fax.

Early Childhood Education – A program serving families and their children from infancy through age six years in settings such as schools and early childhood centers.

Facilities – A school’s building(s), grounds, furnishings, equipment, and vehicles.

Faith-Based Indicators – Indicators of quality that apply to unique aspects of faith-based schools. The use of the Faith-Based Indicators by faith-based schools is voluntary and not required, unless their use is directed by the head of a parent school system such as a school district, diocese, archdiocese, or a similar system of schools. The Faith-Based Indicators allow faith-based schools, if they desire, to include in their self-study and accreditation process Indicators of Quality that address unique characteristics of and expectations for schools whose mission and educational program are defined wholly or in part by their particular faith.

Families – Parents, guardians, caregivers, or others in a custodial relationship with a learner.

Governance – The group or individuals charged with overseeing the direction of the school; may be a governing body, board of trustees, board of education, advisory committee, or some other configuration.

Information Resources – Electronic, print, and other media, as well as interactive learning materials available through a library, in the classroom, or in the wider community that complement course materials and textbooks and enhance the educational program.

Leadership – The head of the school and school system, members of the administrative staff of the school and school system, and all others in administrative positions.

Long-Range Plan – A plan that assumes that the future is fixed and already known; a plan not based on a vision of what the future might or could be but, instead, focused on improving existing systems. The locus of control in long range planning is often external to the organization.

Mission – The unifying theme or vision that illuminates the reason for the school’s existence, the audience that it serves, and its distinctive character.

Proprietary School – A non-public school that is a for profit institution.

Quality – A level of excellence expected by the school’s stakeholders and respected by the larger community.

Related Services – Services that respond to the needs of identified students with special education needs such as speech-language, occupational therapy, physical therapy, and other specialized services.

School – Any type of educational organization seeking school accreditation.

School System – A system of schools that meets the following criteria:

- A legal entity
- A system consisting of more than one component school
- A single governing body
- A chief executive officer or superintendent, or
- A group of faith-based schools affiliated within a community, organization, or diocese

Strategic Plan – A plan based on the principle that the locus of control is inside the organization, because planning is based on the organization’s vision of a preferred future; plan that assumes that, as a human organization, the institution has the ability to exercise control over external factors and can create the future; plan that creates a desired reality and outlines the actions to be taken to obtain that reality.

Student Activities – Activities sanctioned and sponsored by the school that enhance or support the educational program and mission of the school. Such activities can include, but are not limited to sports programs, co- and extracurricular activities, and school clubs.

Student Services – Services, or referrals to services, that address the emotional, physical, and social needs of students, and as appropriate involve their families, including, but not limited to guidance and counseling, speech-language services, occupational therapy, and physical therapy.