

School Self-Study Report

Section Two

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Foreword

The School Self Study section of this guide presents all the information necessary for the writing of the school's Self Study. Each school must note the Required Report Areas and be certain to have those thoroughly covered in the document. Schools generally write between 25 and 30 sub-committee reports for their self studies. During the year when a school is writing its Self Study, it is important to remember that the primary reading audience, the Visiting Team, is comprised of educators, thus the language of education need not be explained as part of the overview portion of the writing. Many schools choose to add an introduction and conclusion segment to each Sub Committee report as they believe that these elements enhance the overall content and presentation of the material – these two pieces remain optional parts of the reports.

One thing that is key to the creation of a school's Self Study is that the document is the story of the individual school. While the structure for the report is outlined here, the parameters are broad enough to allow each school to tell its own story at this particular time in its history. Two important guidelines must be kept in mind during the writing process of the Self Study:

- **DISCLOSURE and CONGRUENCE** – In the simplest of terms, the contents of the Self Study discloses what happens at the school and this account should be congruent with the school's mission.
 - **ACCOUNTABILITY and SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT** – The information of the Self Study, the contents of the addenda for each area, and the day-to-day school life as experienced by the Visiting Team come together in a collective accountability as the daily activities of the school confirm the life of the school. As the process unfolds, schools discover areas that can be enhanced by change; thus, school improvement becomes an integral and natural part of the process.
1. It asks schools to be more analytical than descriptive; the questions included are a means to provoke analysis rather than ends in and of themselves. In fact, this ISACS Accreditation Guide instructs the self-study committees not to answer the questions seriatim but rather to use them as launching points for committee discussion, observations, and analysis, the latter being the preferred content of the self-study committee reports.
 2. It ties analysis in part to a survey of constituents (recommended for the year prior to self-study) so that questions of “congruence” between stated school goals and actual practices can be measured in part by constituent response.
 3. It relates self-study undertakings to visiting committee focuses (“congruence” and ISACS Standards for Membership), so that schools can see from the onset the relationship between these two critical steps in the process.
 4. It streamlines the process by placing all ISACS self-study instructions in one place, by requesting statistics in the same format as already in place in schools and by condensing significantly the verbiage typically found in such guides.
 5. It requests a conclusion section (to both the Self-Study and Visiting Committee Report) so that the product ends with some final impressions and foundations for the school's future.

Since the ISACS Accreditation Guide and the process undergo periodic review and evolutionary change, we would more than welcome any school's using of the guide, critiquing its effectiveness, and making recommendation to ISACS for further refinement and improvement.

Required Report Areas

(See following pages for details)

- **Introduction**

Mission Statement of school. Summary/highlights of school constituent survey. School Profile (Appendix T)

- **Purpose, Goals, and Philosophy**

- **School Community**

Required Report Areas/Subcommittees: The student body; the alumni community; the parent body; the local community; school advancement; overall school climate; gender and diversity.

- **Personnel**

- **Curriculum/Program Overview**

Academics, Athletics, the Arts, Technology, etc.

- **Program**

Approach Choices:

By Structure

By Disciplines

By Developmental Stages

By Thematic Construct

Example:

Lower / Middle / Upper divisions

Art / Language Arts / Math / Science / etc.

Intellectual / Aesthetic / Athletic / Ethical / Social

(e.g. Howard Gardiner's Multiple Intelligences categories)

Outcomes / School Goals / Quality Goals

(e.g. Ernest Boyer's 5 Quality Principles: community/shared vision; centrality of "language;" coherent curriculum; climate for creative learning; character-building)

- **Student Services**

Library, Technology, Athletics, Extracurriculars, Guidance, Testing

- **Specialty Areas**

Extracurriculars, Extended Day, Summer Programs, Residential Life, ESL, LD Programs, etc.

- **Governance & Administration**

Required Report Areas/Subcommittees: School Governance/Decision-Making Process/Strategic Planning; Business Management and Financial Affairs; School Plant/Facilities/Food Service/Transportation

- **Conclusion**

Introduction

As a lead-in to the self-study report, the head of school and the Self-Study Steering Committee are asked to write an introduction (typically placed following the title page and table of contents of the report), including a note of welcome to the visiting team. Generally, the introduction includes the following components:

- Letter of welcome to the visiting team from the head of school.
- The school's mission and philosophy statement.
- Self-Study Steering Committee and visiting team rosters.
- Summary/highlights of the schools' constituent survey. Alternatively, these highlights may be integrated into the body of the report as suggested in Appendix W.
- School Profile (Appendix T).

Required report areas of the self-study follow (also see p. 11 and 12). Appendices F (Possible Subcommittees for Program Section) and G (Sample Self-Study Section) will be helpful. The report ends with a conclusion, also written by the Self-Study Steering Committee.

Purpose, Goals and Philosophy

SELF-STUDY REPORT

Overview Focus

In narrative form, the Self-Study Committee on School Philosophy provides an overview of the history of the school and its mission, including the following information:

A description of the school: location, type, size, program, and corporate identity.

A brief history of the school.

The school's statement of philosophy, purposes and objectives with an indication of where the statement is published, how and when it was last reviewed and officially endorsed by the governing board, and the provision for its dissemination among the school's constituencies.

Related Questions To Answer

(Rather than answering the questions seriatim, a process tending to produce description, ISACS asks self-study committees to use the questions as discussion launching points from which observations and analysis emerge, the preferred content for the self-study committee report.)

Does the school have a statement of philosophy (and/or mission statement) which reflects the individual character of the school, is based upon sound educational tenets and reflective of the characteristics and needs of its youth? Is it clearly stated? Is the philosophy implemented by specific statements of goals and/or objectives, and manifested in the educational program? Is the total school program in compliance with the statement of philosophy (ISACS' congruence principle)? What procedures were followed in the development, revision, and adoption of the statement? What persons were involved? Is there provision for periodic review? Does the statement reflect the unique character of the school? What use is made of the statement? How is the philosophy statement disseminated to the entire school family? Given the mission of the school, what are the philosophical issues implied in and embedded within the very nature of the school (e.g., for learning differences schools the issue of remediation vs. accommodation; for gifted schools, the issue of enrichment vs. acceleration; for Montessori schools the issue of pure Montessori vs. eclectic approach; for traditional schools the issues of family vs. achievement orientation, competition vs. collaboration models, etc.). In form and structure, is the statement succinct (1-page or so) yet comprehensive, including mission (who we are and why we exist), philosophy (what we believe), and goals (for the school, for learning)?

Related Statistics

By reference to the appropriate section of the school's survey of constituents, the Self-Study Committee on School Philosophy reports the extent to which the constituents affirm the school's statement of philosophy and objectives and believe it to be fulfilled by the school.

Self-Study Conclusions

The Self-Study Committee on School Philosophy presents its evaluation of the school's statement of philosophy and objectives and indicates the conclusions it has drawn from its study, indicating strengths, weaknesses or challenges, and any plans and priorities for the future.

Addenda

In the addenda to the self-study (available to the team when it visits, but not mailed), attach a photocopy of the school's statement of philosophy and objectives, with evidence of the most recent board endorsement.

Visiting Team Report

Charge

The Visiting Team makes its independent assessment on the degree to which the ISACS standards are being met and the congruence between the school's stated mission and its practices. The Visiting Team issues its general appraisal, commendations, and recommendations in its report to ISACS and to the School.

Relevant ISACS Standards for Membership

A7: There shall be full disclosure of the school's mission, policies, programs and practices.

A8: There shall be a high degree of congruence between the stated mission of the school and the actual program and practices of the school.

B1: There shall be a clearly articulated statement of educational mission and philosophy that reflects the individual character of the school, based upon sound educational tenets. Such statement shall reflect the characteristics and needs of its youth, and shall be implemented by a specific statement of goals and/or objectives and manifested in the educational program.

B2: The governing body shall approve the statement of educational mission and philosophy; it shall be understood and supported by the governing body, administration, faculty, and staff.

B3: Where appropriate, the development and periodic review of the philosophy and objectives shall be a collective effort involving faculty, students, administrators, parents and the board.

School Community

SELF-STUDY REPORT

Overview Focus

In narrative form, the Self-Study Committee on School Community provides in its signed report an overview of the entire school community. The school can write a single comprehensive report or several sub-reports, addressing the various constituencies and issues within the community, e.g., the student body (admissions/student demographics); school advancement; alumni relations; the parent community, the local community, school climate, gender & diversity issues. The committee gathers information, data, and impressions in order to present in narrative form an analysis of its element of the school community, the overview. Each subcommittee report will also contain a list of strengths, challenges, and any plans and priorities (3-5 for each area) for the report area. The various topic reports function as subsets of the Self-Study Committee on School Community's overall report, which synthesizes and analyzes the subcommittee findings. In the overall Self-Study Committee on School Community report (or in its subcommittee sections), the following issues should be addressed:

The Student Body: An assessment of the composition of the student body, its diversity in backgrounds and abilities, and the relationship of that diversity to admissions policies; financial aid; criteria for admission, including standardized test scores; the program for orientation of new students; analysis of attrition as well as enrollment management/retention strategies.

The Alumni/ae: An assessment of the role of alumni/ae in the continuing life of the school including indication of alumni/ae participation in on-going activities, alumni/ae publications, alumni/ae support of the school, alumni/ae events etc. (One or more alumni/ae should contribute to this narrative.)

The Parent Community: A description of the role of parents in the life of the school, the parents association, and the extent to which parent-school communication is effective and parent expectations are being met. (One or more parents should contribute to this narrative.)

The Local Community: A description of the school's interaction with the local community and its role in the larger communities it may serve (state, regional, national, or international).

School Climate: An analysis of the culture, ethos, morale, and spirit of the school and its community.

Equity and Justice: An analysis of gender and diversity matters at the school in terms of equity, the demographics of staffing, enrollment, compensation, and program, and the school's progress along the diversity continuum of "Awareness to Commitment to Action."

Related Questions to Address

(Rather than answering the questions seriatim, a process tending to produce description, ISACS asks self-study committees to use the questions as discussion launching points from which observations and analysis emerge, the preferred content for the self-study committee report.)

Overall School Community: How does the school define its community? What is unique about the school community? Has the nature of the school community changed over the course of the school's history? If so, how? Is the nature of the community changing currently? If so, in what direction? What is the profile of the desired board, faculty, and student body of the school?

The Student Body: What are the admissions criteria of the school? Is there an integrated plan for marketing/enrollment/financial aid/retention? Is the admissions process non-discriminatory and in keeping with the school's philosophy? Are prospective parents fully advised of their financial and other obligations? Is there a formal enrollment contract that clearly states parental rights and obligations? Who is responsible for decisions regarding admissions? What types and amounts of scholarships and financial aid are provided? How is financial aid funded? What are the criteria for awarding aid? Who is responsible for decisions regarding financial aid? How does financial aid impact enrollment? Does the school have a marketing plan that takes into account the school's mission and needs, demographics, and long range plan? Is the school forthright in its marketing efforts? Does the school follow principles of good practice in admissions (Appendix B)?

School Advancement: What is the relationship among the various elements of a development program: marketing, public relations, alumni/ae affairs, and strategic planning? How successful are the fund-raising efforts of the school? Does the board direct and share in this effort and participate fully in the various campaigns? Does the school take active steps to keep its community informed and to maintain a positive public-relations image? Are appropriate alumni/ae records maintained? Are alumni/ae involved in the life of the school? Does the school have a long-range (or strategic) plan, with provision for periodic review and revision? Do the efforts in all of these areas work together for the enhancement of the school?

The Parent Community: How and to what extent are parents involved in the school community? What means do parents have to communicate individually and collectively to the school? Are parents represented on the board of trustees? To what extent?

The Local Community: What is the role of the school in the local community and the attitude of the local community toward the school? What are the local community resources available, and to what extent does the school use them?

School Climate: What are the factors causing high or low morale? How would one describe the “school spirit”? What impressions does a visitor receive? Is there generally a “good feeling” about the school? What degree of “satisfaction” is evidenced by surveys of constituents?

Equity and Justice: ISACS schools strive to ensure that all students will have an equal opportunity to experience educational success while feeling secure in their physical and emotional safety. By providing students with a multicultural educational experience, we also hope to work towards the goal of an equitable, inclusive and just society. School communities that are diverse and multicultural move us towards this goal. The distinction between what comprises a diverse and just school community and what makes for a multicultural school community can be determined by considering some definitions.

Diversity acknowledges our differences with respect to the following markers: gender, ethnicity, race, age, socio-economic status, religion, sexual orientation, and abilities. Schools must recognize that our society confers advantages and disadvantages on groups and individuals based upon those differences. At the same time, schools must acknowledge that those who represent these and other differences have a voice in a democratic society.

Justice requires that we respect the dignity and worth of every individual by providing equality of opportunity for those to whom opportunities have been historically denied. Multiculturalism celebrates our differences as a means of enriching our lives while providing opportunities to gain the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to function in a pluralistic society.

In pursuit of the above goals, schools should ask themselves the following questions: How do various members and groups within the school community perceive the school climate? Does the school culture feel safe, welcoming, and inclusive to all of its members? How is this demonstrated? Are channels available through which diverse constituencies or members may safely raise issues of concern to them? What are they? Are individuals who represent diversity evident in the composition of key constituencies (board, administration, staff, student body, faculty) and in leadership roles therein? How does the school stay abreast of new trends and strategies related to diversity and multicultural education? How are diversity and multicultural issues incorporated into curriculum planning and educational materials acquisition? Do curricular materials, exhibits, library collections reflect a commitment to multicultural education? Is the pedagogy of the school examined in terms of the amount of time various groups of students receive attention from teachers and with respect to the varying effectiveness of teaching modes in meeting students’ needs? What process is used to make this determination? Are allocations of resources (e.g. for athletic facilities, computer labs, extracurricular activities) examined in terms of similar expectations of balance? Is the dress code equitably applied? What holidays does the school choose to observe and how are diverse groups helped to feel included in school celebrations? Do salary statistics indicate fairness? Are the standards of behavior and academic performance the same for recipients of financial aid as for non-recipients? Are anti-harassment policies in place at the school and are they working? Does the policy delineate the responsibility of all members of the community for first creating a climate in which all members are safe and, when necessary, bringing violations to the immediate attention of the Head of School or her delegate? What evidence exists that all constituencies (faculty, board, administrators, parents, students) are encouraged to develop further knowledge and expertise in supporting diversity and multicultural education? Is anti-bias training part of professional development? How is this achieved? What accommodations are made to meet the varying needs of students, parents, and faculty of diverse backgrounds? How does the school respond to conflicts that may arise out of diversity and multicultural issues? Has the Board of Trustees defined its understanding of diversity? Have there been Board level discussions around the issues of equity and justice?

Related Statistics

By reference to the appropriate section of the school’s survey of constituents, the Self-Study Committee on School Community reports the extent to which the constituents believe that the school meets its obligations to its various communities. By reference to the statistics included in the addenda to this report, the committee analyzes current facts and recent historical trends in terms of make-up of the various school communities and their respective commitment to the school.

Self-Study Conclusions

The Self-Study Committee on School Community presents its evaluation of the school's community and indicates the conclusions it has drawn from its study, indicating strengths, weaknesses or challenges, and any plans and priorities for the future.

Addenda

In the addenda to the self-study (available to the team when it visits, but not mailed), attach a photocopy of the school catalog's statements on admissions policies and procedures (including any references to financial aid), as well as the official statement on nondiscriminatory admissions practices. Attach as well a photocopy of the school's official documents and catalog statements to parents regarding their financial obligations upon enrolling a child in the school as well as the standard enrollment contract.

Also, attach a compiled summary of the last three year's (including the current year, if available) school statistics (Appendix T). If the school is a member of NAIS, it is encouraged to utilize NAIS STATS Online to produce the 10-year summary of statistics on these topics. Make available to the Visiting Team upon its arrival to the school copies of standard admissions materials: application and contract forms, interview and health forms, alumni office publications, student publications, communications to parents, etc.

VISITING TEAM REPORT

Charge

The Visiting Team makes its independent assessment on the degree to which the ISACS standards are being met and the congruence between the school's stated mission and its practices. The Visiting Committee issues its general appraisal, commendations, and recommendations in its report to ISACS and to the School.

Relevant ISACS Standards for Membership

A2: There shall be no discrimination against any person in admissions, employment, or otherwise that is in violation of the law.

A6: The school shall subscribe to the ISACS Statement of "Principles of Good Practice" with respect to employment of faculty and admission of students and shall be guided by the NAIS "Principles of Good Practice" in all other areas of school operations.

B4: Consistent with its mission, the school shall demonstrate its commitment to equity and justice through its governance and leadership, curriculum, support programs, admissions, financial aid, staffing, and activities.

C1: There shall be clearly defined admissions policies and procedures consistent with the stated mission and philosophy of the school and which provide the general criteria upon which admissions are made.

C2: The school shall require each candidate for admission to undergo evaluation to enable the school and the student to determine if matriculation would be mutually beneficial. A student shall be admitted only when it is determined that the school can adequately meet the needs of the student.

C3: Prior to a student's enrollment, parents (or guardian) shall be fully informed of their financial responsibilities to the school.

C4: The school shall be attentive to the quality of life of all members of the learning community and take appropriate actions to create a positive learning and social environment.

C5: The school shall have an organization and procedures for the effective communication with, and involvement of, parents in a way that is appropriate to their interests as well as the purposes and objectives of the school.

Personnel

SELF-STUDY REPORT

Overview Focus

In narrative form, the Self-Study Committee on Personnel provides in its signed report an overview of school personnel including the following information:

A description of faculty and support staff recruitment, orientation, and evaluation procedures.

A description of opportunities and stipulations for faculty professional development and growth, faculty leadership, and a sampling of recent professional undertakings and achievements by the faculty and administration.

A description of the administrative and support staff structure of the school.

Related Questions to Address

(Rather than answering the questions seriatim, a process tending to produce description, ISACS asks self-study committees to use the questions as discussion launching points from which observations and analysis emerge, the preferred content for the self-study committee report.)

Are teachers qualified, adequate in number, and appropriately assigned (See Teacher Qualifications, Appendix C)? Is adequate and qualified support staff provided? Are there written employment agreements and benefit programs? What provisions exist for orientation and evaluation of personnel? Are in-service training programs and opportunities for professional growth provided? What provisions exist for termination for cause or non-renewal of contract for poor performance? How are teachers recruited? How are teachers supported and rewarded? Does the school maintain appropriate personnel records? What is the “organizational climate” of the school? Does the school adhere to the ISACS statement of “Principles of Good Practice in Employment” (Appendix B)? Are personnel policies clearly presented in a faculty/staff handbook?

Related Statistics

By reference to the appropriate section of the school’s survey of constituents, the Self-Study Committee on Personnel reports the extent to which the constituents believe that the school faculty meets its professional obligations and the extent to which the provisions for faculty evaluation, faculty professional growth, and faculty leadership are successful. By reference to and analysis of the statistics and information included in the addenda to this report, the committee comments on personnel issues: salary levels and spread, proportion of teachers at various career and salary stages, diversity of faculty, educational background of faculty, etc. (Note: If faculty salary ranges are confidential, this information may be shared privately between the head of school and the chair of the ISACS Visiting Team.)

Self-Study Conclusions

The Self-Study Committee on Personnel presents its evaluation of the school’s personnel and indicates the conclusions it has drawn from its study, highlighting strengths, weaknesses or challenges, and any plans and priorities for the future.

Addenda

In the addenda to the self-study (available to the team when it visits, but not mailed), attach a compiled summary of the last three year’s (including the current year, if available) school statistics (Appendix T). If the school is a member of NAIS, it is encouraged to utilize NAIS STATS Online to produce the 10-year summary of statistics on these topics. (Note: If faculty salary ranges are confidential, this information may be shared privately between the head of school and the ISACS Visiting Team Leader.)

Attach as well a faculty/administrative directory that lists each faculty member, indicating colleges and degrees, major fields of study, course-load, student load, number of preparations, administrative responsibilities, extracurricular responsibilities, years of teaching experience, years with the school, professional memberships/affiliations, and professional development activities over the last three years.

Make available to the Visiting Committee upon the arrival at the school the following materials: sample faculty hiring letter/contract; school’s official statement on non-discriminatory hiring practices; summary of employee benefits; faculty handbook; any school policies or statements on faculty professional growth and development; faculty evaluation procedures/instrument; individual teacher information form including class schedule for each teacher.

VISITING TEAM REPORT

Charge

The Visiting Committee makes its independent assessment on the degree to which the ISACS standards are being met and the congruence between the school's stated mission and its practices. The Visiting Committee issues its general appraisal, commendations, and recommendations in its report to ISACS and to the school.

Relevant ISACS Standards for Membership

A2: There shall be no discrimination against any person in admissions, employment, or otherwise that is in violation of the law.

A6: The school shall subscribe to the ISACS Statement of "Principles of Good Practice" with respect to employment of faculty and admission of students and shall be guided by the NAIS "Principles of Good Practice" in all other areas of school operations.

B4: Consistent with its mission, the school shall demonstrate its commitment to equity and justice through its governance and leadership, curriculum, support programs, admissions, financial aid, staffing, and activities.

E8: There shall be evidence of regular, documented evaluation of the performance of the administration, faculty and staff, and understood procedures for non-renewal and termination of employment. The board shall regularly conduct a self-evaluation and make provision for periodic board development.

F1: The administration, faculty and staff shall be qualified for their positions and responsibilities by education and/or experience.

F2: There shall be clearly established procedures for recruiting, screening, and interviewing prospective faculty.

F3: There shall be fair and appropriate personnel policies, salaries and benefits for all employees.

F4: Each employee shall be clearly informed of his or her compensation, term of employment, and principal duties.

F5: The school demonstrates a commitment to the professional development of its staff. (Examples might include any or all of the following: funding professional development at appropriate levels; providing new teachers with training and mentors; encouraging attendance at professional conferences and workshops; expecting staff to develop individual professional development plans; assignment of school-wide professional development responsibilities to the ISACS rep; etc.).

F6: There shall be adequate procedures for identifying changing needs and priorities in faculty and staff requirements.

Program

SELF-STUDY REPORT

Overview Focus

In narrative form, the Self-Study Committee on Program presents in its signed report an overview of the school program, by which ISACS means the total developmental and learning experiences provided by the school. Since a school's program is its vital center, so too the school's self-study should center on program, with more investment in personnel, time, and analysis on this than on any other part of the self-study. Typically, the Committee on Program would oversee the work of several subcommittees assigned to specific elements of the school's program: e.g., Lower School Program, Language Arts/Math/Science (etc.) Programs, Athletics, the Arts, Extended Day Program (schools with elementary programs), Residential Life Program (boarding schools), etc.

Each school is invited to adopt whatever methodology and subcommittee structure it determines most appropriate to study, evaluate, and present its program. Any one or combination of the following approaches is acceptable for gathering data and assessing the program, although a school is not limited to these options. (Appendix F for listing of possible subcommittees in the Program Area.)

Analysis by school divisions and/or disciplines of study: Assigning distinct subcommittees to study discrete divisions and disciplines: lower/middle/upper school, English, math, social studies, foreign language, science, arts, health/P.E., etc. **For the first ISACS Self-Study, schools are required to use this approach.** Alternative approaches to study of program (outlined in 2-3 below) require that the curriculum committee still write an Overview Focus that outlines the general thrust of the academic program, include separate sections within the program area on "student services" and "other programs" as specified in the ISACS Membership and Accreditation Guide, and provide all the academic documentation outlined in the Guide's Appendices F & G, such as curriculum guide/syllabi, testing, etc.

Analysis by areas of student growth and development: Assigning subcommittees by distinct developmental areas (e.g., intellectual, aesthetic, athletic, ethical, social) or "intelligences" (i.e., Howard Gardiner's theory of the multiple "intelligences": musical, bodily/kinesthetic, logical/mathematical, linguistic, spatial, interpersonal, and intrapersonal).

Analysis by thematic or global framework: Assigning subcommittees to address specific themes or issues, such as:

- Desired outcomes: the "outcomes-based performance" model focusing on desired outcomes, measurable performance, and goals for improvement—subcommittees for each desired outcome.
OR
- School's statement of philosophy: the mission statement model focusing on applying elements of the statement of philosophy to every aspect of program—subcommittees for each element of mission statement.
OR
- Global issues: the thematic approach model focusing on the common global questions a school may wish to contemplate: e.g., "What is quality independent school education for the 21st century?"; "What are the values embedded in our program?"; "How do we prepare students for the multicultural/pluralistic future?"; "How do we integrate the new technologies into our program?"; "What are the pedagogies of the school and the relative weight given to differing teaching approaches?;" etc.—subcommittees for each global question.
OR
- "Quality" and "customer satisfaction" issues: the Total Quality Management—TQM model—focusing on defining quality and identifying "customer" issues—subcommittees for each quality and customer satisfaction issue.

Whatever the methodology and subcommittee structure chosen by the school, the subcommittees gather information, data, and impressions in order to present in narrative form an analysis of their element of the program, with overview, identification of strengths, challenges/weaknesses, and any plans and priorities for the future. The various subcommittee reports function as subsets of the Program Committee's curriculum report, which assesses the cumulative impact of the various subcommittee reports in order to develop and present an overall report. The report should include in its narrative overview commentary on at least the following areas:

- Relationship of the overall program to the school's stated mission and its success in contributing to and advancing the mission.
- Relationship of the major elements of the program (academics, arts, athletics, extracurriculars, technology, etc.) to one another and to the support of and advancement of the school mission.
- Organizational pattern and curriculum design of the school (departmental, self-contained, open classroom; schedule and calendar; etc.).
- Curriculum and program development (noting the faculty's role therein) and the responsiveness to the needs of students and to the educational issues of the day (e.g., provisions for those with differing learning needs and styles, interdisciplinary study, multicultural issues, integration of new technologies, etc.).
- Student assessment: noting the internal mechanisms the school uses to assess student growth and progress, overall, in the program, seeking to show the "value added" of the school's impact on the progress of the students.
- Integration of technology into the classroom and program.

Related Questions to Address

(Rather than answering the questions seriatim, a process tending to produce description, ISACS asks self-study committees to use the questions as discussion launching points from which observations and analysis emerge, the preferred content for the self-study committee report.)

Overall Curriculum: Does the curriculum demonstrate adequate depth and breadth? Is there continuity? Interdisciplinary integration? Reasonable balance among disciplines, and among standard components of learning? Provision for development of study skills? How is curricular change initiated and carried out? How is effectiveness assessed (curriculum evaluation)? Is the curriculum consistent with school philosophy? Does the curriculum as a whole help the school to achieve its educational goals and objectives? Are athletics and the arts conceived as part of the curriculum? Is there a well-articulated curriculum guide? (Appendix E)

Academic Areas: Is there a clear sense of scope and sequence to the curriculum? Departmental organization and meetings? Provision for exceptional students? Varied pedagogies and methodologies of instruction and variety in presentation? High degree of student participation and positive student attitudes? Attractive classroom appearance and atmosphere? Evidence of student interest and achievement?

Achievement and Outcomes Assessment: To what extent does the school actually measure its performance on the student-learning front? How much value is added, intellectually and academically and ethically, by the experience of the school, and how does the school measure and document that value? What plan, if any, does the school have for improving student learning?

Library/Media/Technology Services: Is each academic area and school division adequately represented in the library collection? Most importantly, are the quantity, quality, and diversity of the collection adequate to meet school needs? Is the instructional program in library usage and skills appropriate and sufficient for the school? Has the library incorporated the new technologies into its system? To what extent has technology been incorporated into the classroom?

Student Activities: Are the student activities programs (extracurricular activities) related to the school's philosophy, and do they aid in realizing the educational and social purposes of the school? Are they integrated into the total school program? Are there an adequate number of activities, variety, an appropriate degree of student involvement, and sufficient funding, supervision, and effectiveness?

Student Personnel Services & Auxiliary Programs: What is the perceived quality of the food service, transportation service, and health service? Are auxiliary programs or services (such as extended day programs, campus stores, chapel services, summer school programs, independent study programs, residential life for boarding schools) compatible with the overall philosophy and program of the school? What services are provided in the four counseling areas: -personal, academic, secondary school/college, and vocational counseling? What procedures are in place for student orientation, advising, recognition, discipline, and reporting to parents? Is the counseling/advising program adequate for meeting student needs? How does the school assess student progress? To what extent does the school monitor student growth over time?

Related Statistics

By reference to the appropriate sections of the school's survey of constituents, the Self-Study Committee on Program and each of the subcommittees report the extent to which its program is perceived to be effective.

The school provides data from its tracking of the academic success of students and alumni, citing whatever batteries of standardized tests it utilizes: e.g., SRA Achievement scores, ERB, College Board Achievement Test scores, etc.

Self-Study Conclusions

The Self-Study Committee on Program presents its evaluation of the school's program and indicates the conclusions it has drawn from its study, indicating strengths, weaknesses or challenges, and any plans and priorities for the future.

Addenda

In the addenda to the self-study (available to the team when it visits, but not mailed), attach a photocopy of the school's academic profile, graduation requirements, the daily schedule, and the yearly calendar. Make available at the time of the Visiting Team visit sample student report forms and permanent records, the curriculum guide and syllabus for each class or course offered in the department or division as well as any school handbooks that present the rules and regulations of the school for matters of academe, discipline, and the like.

VISITING TEAM REPORT

Charge

The Visiting Team makes its independent assessment on the degree to which the ISACS standards are being met and the congruence between the school's stated mission and its practices. The Visiting Team issues its general appraisal, commendations, and recommendations in its report to ISACS and to the School.

Relevant ISACS Standards for Membership

A7: There shall be full disclosure of the school's mission, policies, programs and practices.

A8: There shall be a high degree of congruence between the stated mission of the school and the actual program and practices of the school.

A9: The school shall provide clear evidence that it permits and encourages freedom of inquiry. The school shall stress the teaching of critical reasoning and independent thinking as opposed to indoctrination.

B1: There shall be a clearly articulated statement of educational mission and philosophy that reflects the individual character of the school, based upon sound educational tenets. Such statement shall reflect the characteristics and needs of the school's youth, and shall be implemented by a specific statement of goals and/or objectives and manifested in the educational program. If an ISACS school is religiously affiliated, the academic and extracurricular programs must be based primarily on an educational rationale.

C4: The school shall be attentive to the quality of life of all members of the learning community and take appropriate actions to create a positive learning and social environment.

D1: The program shall be based on guiding beliefs and assumptions, shared broadly by the faculty and administration, which evolve from the school's statement of educational mission and purpose. Such beliefs shall include an understanding of ways in which students learn and develop, and the appropriate means of instruction for all students enrolled in the school.

D2: The school shall promote student development in the major domains of human learning.

D3: The school's program shall include a balance of humanities, fine arts, foreign language, mathematics, science, social science, and physical education as is appropriate for the ages, needs, and abilities of students enrolled in the school.

D4: The school shall stress the teaching of knowledge, skills, critical reasoning, and independent thinking as opposed to indoctrination.

D5: The program shall have sufficient diversity for the capacities, styles, developmental needs and cultural backgrounds of the students enrolled in the school.

D6: The program shall include a balance of academic, extracurricular, and athletic activities as is consistent with the school's purpose.

D7: The school shall have a curriculum that is articulated in written form and evident in the program of the school. Provision shall be made for faculty involvement in periodic review, evaluation and development of the school's program.

D8: The school shall provide adequate program support that reflects the school's philosophy including library/media and technology services, guidance services, special needs support, and health services.

D9: The school day and year shall be sufficient for the total school program.

D10: Schools demonstrate an assessment process to measure growth, development, and achievement of their students.

G1: If there is a residential program, it must be so conceived and staffed to fulfill that aspect of the school's program, particularly with respect to the portion of the day outside regular classroom hours. Applicable health and safety regulations shall be fully observed.

G2: The relationship between the school and any special programs it offers on a supplementary basis (summer sessions, before and after school programs, special education, seminars, institutes, etc.) shall be fully disclosed. The operation of such supplementary programs shall not be in conflict with the school's purpose or ISACS standards for regular programs.

Governance & Administration

SELF-STUDY REPORT

Overview Focus

In narrative form, the Self-Study Committee on Governance & Administration provides in its signed report an overview of the school's governance, administration, and decision-making process. Typically, schools assign self-study work in this area to subcommittees (e.g., School Governance and the Decision-Making Process; Business Management and Financial Affairs; School Plant and Facilities). Each subcommittee gathers information, data, and impressions in order to present in narrative form an analysis of its element of the school community (in the typical format of overview, identification of strengths, weaknesses or challenges, and any plans and priorities for the future). The various subcommittee reports function as subsets of the Self-Study Committee on Governance & Administration's overall report, which synthesizes and analyzes the subcommittee findings. In the overall Self-Study Committee on Governance & Administration report (or in its subcommittee sections), the following issues should be addressed:

1. A description of the school's board of trustees or governing body and its operations, with an example of the process and implementation of a recent major board decision. One or more trustees should contribute to this narrative.
2. A description of board policies including trustee selection, responsibilities, board/head relationship, orientation, committee structure, and trustee evaluation; a description of board/school policies that serve to place the school in compliance with federal mandates: e.g., Family Leave Act, A.I.D.S. policy; EPA directives (asbestos, lead, radon); Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA); "good faith" initiatives; policy, if any, on the acceptance of state or federal funds; board policies on admissions and financial aid; etc.
3. A description of the head of the school (educational background, experience, and length of service at the school) and an indication of head evaluation procedures.
4. A description of the administrative structure of the school and administrative operating procedures.
5. A description of the decision-making process and its implementation at the administrative level of school operations providing an example of such a recent major decision indicating the involvement where appropriate of faculty, students, parents, and alumni/ae in the decision-making process.
6. A description of the school's plan for school improvement (current strategic plans and long range plans are also acceptable, see page 3) and the status of its current strategic plan.
7. A description of the financial resources, financial auditing process, financial planning, and monitoring procedures to sustain the program of the school.
8. A description of systems for maintaining and improving the physical plant: official inspections, insurance, housekeeping and maintenance programs, plans for capital replacements and renewals, energy conservation.

Related Questions to Address

(Rather than answering the questions seriatim, a process tending to produce description, ISACS asks self-study committees to use the questions as discussion launching points from which observations and analysis emerge, the preferred content for the self-study committee report.)

School Governance and the Decision-Making Process: What is the organizational structure of the school, and how does it operate? Does the school's board establish school policy and grant adequate autonomy to the administration to carry out these policies? How does the board define "conflict of interest"? Are school policies and procedures written and disseminated? How are policy and/or procedural decisions reached? How is change initiated and effected? Is there a clear process for decision-making that is understood by the school community? To what extent is the total school community involved in the decision-making process? Is there provision for periodic evaluation of the board, the school head, and the administrative staff? What is the quality and status of the school's strategic plan?

Business Management and Financial Affairs: Is there an independent, opinion-level financial audit at least twice within each seven-year cycle (as required by ISACS)? Is the school fiscally responsible? Is it stable, efficient, and effective in its financial operations? Is there adequate provision for insurance coverage, bonding, security, etc.? Does the school have sufficient resources to provide and maintain facilities, plant, and personnel adequate to support the program of the school?

School Plant and Facilities: Do the school plant and facilities adequately accommodate the school program? Are health and safety primary concerns? Is the school in compliance with all health and safety codes? Is the plant adequately maintained with appropriate maintenance and housekeeping care? Are fire and other emergency drills held regularly? Is respect for property evident? Are any unsafe conditions in evidence (especially in laboratories, art rooms, shops, swimming pools, physical education and playground areas, and parking/bus areas)?

Related Statistics

By reference to the appropriate sections of the constituent survey, the Self-Study Committee on Governance & Administration reports the extent to which the various constituencies of the school perceive the school's board and administration leadership to be successful and the various administrative and plant offices to be effective. By reference to and analysis of the statistics and information included in the addenda to this report, the committee comments on the budget and finances of the school.

Self-Study Conclusions

The Self-Study Committee on Governance & Administration presents its evaluation of the school's governance, administration, and decision-making and indicates the conclusions it has drawn from its study, indicating strengths, weaknesses or challenges, and any plans and priorities for the future.

Addenda

In the addenda to the self-study (available to the team when it visits, but not mailed), attach a photocopy of agendas of recent board and faculty meetings and a photocopy of the school's IRS 501(c)(3) letter.

Also attach a summary of the last three year's (including the current year, if available) school statistics, including budget, income & expenses, endowment. Please use the form in Appendix T, School Profile. If the school is a member of NAIS, it encouraged to utilize NAIS STATS Online to produce the 10-year summary of statistics on these topics.

Make available to the Visiting Committee upon its arrival to the school a copy of the by laws of the school and a copy of the trustee directory, designating officers. Also make available a copy of the current year's operating budget, the opinion-level audit for the preceding year, documentation that facilities and personnel conform to local and state public safety and health regulations, and board/school policies for federally mandated matters (Family Leave Act, ADA, Blood-borne Pathogens, EPA requirements for asbestos and lead, etc.).

VISITING TEAM REPORT

Charge

The Visiting Team makes its independent assessment of the degree to which the school being visited is in compliance with the ISACS Standards of Membership. The Visiting Team Report is comprised of a general appraisal, commendations, and recommendations in its report to ISACS and to the School for each report submitted in the school's Self Study.

Relevant ISACS Standards for Membership

A1: The school shall be incorporated as a not-for-profit organization and shall have been granted 501(c)(3) status by the Internal Revenue Service, or equivalent form of tax-exempt status.

A3: The school shall maintain its facilities and equipment so as to meet applicable health, fire, safety, and sanitary standards.

A4: There shall be at least two professional, certified financial audits of the school's finances within each seven-year cycle, one of which shall occur during the final fiscal year preceding the on-site evaluation visit.

A5: The school and its governance structure shall be organized with sufficient independence, from other organizations, so as to ensure its ability to fulfill its mission and to control its own destiny.

A7: There shall be full disclosure of the school's mission, policies, programs and practices.

A8: There shall be a high degree of congruence between the stated mission of the school and the actual program and practices of the school.

A10: The school shall demonstrate its commitment to quality improvement through its compliance with the required ISACS septennial evaluation program including a survey of constituents, self-study, visitation by an ISACS team, and prescribed follow-up activity and reports.

E1: A Board of Trustees (Governors, Directors) shall be sufficient in number to effect the growth and prosperity of the school and shall develop major school policies, oversee and maintain the financial stability of the school, lead in fundraising and promotion, and employ, evaluate, and support the school head.

E2: The administration shall be developed and organized so as to carry out policies effectively. It shall be responsible for school programs, personnel, facilities, and resources, to include the employment of all faculty, staff and support personnel.

E3: The school shall demonstrate effective boundaries between the policy-making role of the board and the role of the school head as the manager of day-to-day operations.

E4: The board and administration shall provide for a clearly stated decision-making process, for the creation, implementation, and review of a strategic plan, for the periodic review of school organization, and for appropriate modification of programs and services.

E5: The board shall generate necessary resources for providing and maintaining physical facilities, equipment and materials adequate to support the program of the school.

E6: There shall be appropriate procedures for management of financial resources including budget development, fiscal management, accounting, auditing such accounts, and long-range planning.

E7: The school shall provide adequate fundraising, public relations, and financial management support to achieve the school's mission.

E8: There shall be evidence of regular, documented evaluation of the performance of the administration, faculty and staff, and understood procedures for non-renewal and termination of employment. The board shall regularly conduct a self-evaluation and make provision for periodic board development.

E9: There shall be periodic review of the school's by-laws to ensure compliance with law and with the best current practice.

Conclusion

SELF-STUDY REPORT

Overview Focus

In narrative form, the Steering Committee writes a brief conclusion to the Self-Study in which it provides:

1. An assessment of the self-study process itself, its strengths and challenges.
2. Some thoughts about the major themes that emerged in the process, in particular ones that may cross the boundaries of various sub committees and their reports.
3. An indication of the imperatives the committee believes: After having studied the school for a year, the Self-Study Steering Team may feel compelled to urge the school to take certain “next steps.” What should those “next steps” be?

VISITING TEAM REPORT

Charge

The Visiting Team makes its independent assessment on the degree to which the ISACS standards are being met in total and the overall congruence between the school’s stated mission and its practices. The Visiting Team issues its concluding remarks, and summarizes major commendations and recommendations in its report to ISACS and to the school.

Additionally, The Visiting Team takes a confidential vote on what accreditation recommendation to make to ISACS, but this vote and recommendation **are not** shared with the school, since it is the task of the ISACS Board to take under advisement the recommendation of the Visiting Team and the subsequent action by the Evaluation Review Committee.

Finally, the Visiting Team Leader, in an exit report to the school, shares the major findings, commendations, and recommendations (but not the accreditation advisement to ISACS) with the faculty and administration.