

Content of Report Areas

(from the ISACS *Evaluation Guide*)

Use the following as guidelines when you read the school's self-study or when you interview school personnel.

Philosophy Does the statement express clearly the mission of the school? Has it been reviewed and adopted by the governing board of the school? Is it published prominently and included in various school publications including the faculty handbook? Are faculty, students, parents, and trustees familiar with the statement? Can someone tell you the mission of the school, either by reciting or paraphrasing the mission statement? Is there provision for periodic review of the statement? Within the philosophy statement itself and elsewhere, is there full disclosure of the school's mission and program? Is there a high degree of congruence between the stated mission of the school and the actual program and practices of the school? (See ISACS Standards for Membership – Section B: Purpose, Goals, and Philosophy)

School and Community This report should review the school both **as** a community and **in** its geographic community. How does the school define and describe its internal community? Describe this community and its unique characteristics. Is the school attentive to the quality of life of all members of the learning community? Does the school take appropriate action to create a positive learning and social environment? Do all segments of the school family feel a part of this community? Describe the geographic community of the school. What is the school's role in this community, and the attitude of this community toward the school? Are resources available in this community, and does the school use them? To what extent is the school involved in the life of the community? (Note: Information provided in the School Climate report need not be repeated in this report.) (See ISACS Standards for Membership – Section C: Community of the School)

Financial Management Provide a brief description of financial and accounting procedures: budgeting, billings, financial reports, etc.. Has a full-opinion financial audit been conducted for the year prior to the evaluation visit and at least one other time during the previous seven years as required by ISACS? Is the school fiscally stable and responsible? Is it efficient and effective in its financial operations? Is there adequate provision for insurance coverage, bonding, security, backup of records, etc.? Does the school have sufficient financial resources to provide and maintain facilities, plant, equipment, and personnel to adequately support the programs of the school? Is there a written contract of enrollment? Are parents fully advised in advance of their financial obligations?

Governance and Decision-Making Describe the organizational structure of the school, and explain briefly how it operates. Is the school truly "independent" (see the ISACS definition of independence)? Does the school carefully delineate between the Board's role as a policy-making body and the Head's role as the chief operating officer, responsible for the day-to-day operation of the school? Is the head granted sufficient autonomy to carry out board-established policies? How are board policies established,

and procedures disseminated? How is the entire school community kept advised of board policies, and especially of changes in policy? To what extent is the total school community involved in the decision-making process? Are clear lines of communication established between faculty and administration, between administration and board, and (perhaps) between board and faculty? Are there written job descriptions for the school head and for significant administrative positions? Is there an established, written procedure for regular evaluation of the board and the school head? Is the procedure followed on a consistent basis? Most importantly – does the school have a current, comprehensive Strategic (Long Range) Plan? (See ISACS Standards for Membership – Section E: Governance & Administration)

Personnel This report should include information regarding both administrative and teaching personnel as well as support staff. In addition to general information regarding structure, numbers, organization, teaching load and such, it should also include information regarding the recruitment and selection of personnel, contractual provisions (written? benefits? assignments?), qualifications, opportunities for professional growth, in-service training, internal communication, meetings, and evaluation. While some very general comment may be made regarding quality and effectiveness, individual teachers should not be evaluated, and there should be no reference – directly or indirectly – to any individual. Does the school accept and follow the “Principles of Good Practice” as published by ISACS? (See ISACS Standards for Membership – Sections E and F)

Admissions and Financial Aid Does the school employ an Admission Director, and provide a job description? Provide general information regarding the school’s total admissions process; advertising, recruitment, testing, interviewing, past school records, admission decisions, etc.. Is there a formal contract of enrollment, which clearly states parental rights and obligations? Who is responsible for the final decision regarding enrollment? What types and amounts of scholarships and financial aid are provided? What are the criteria? What procedures are followed in determining awards? How are such awards funded? Who is responsible for decisions regarding financial aid?

School Climate and Morale This report should determine – through use of the ISACS Constituent Survey findings, interviews, and observation – the feeling and attitudes of students, teachers, administrators, staff, parents and trustees. What impressions does the visitor receive? Are there a “school spirit” and/or a “school culture” in evidence? Is there generally a good feeling about the school? What factors most prominently contribute to this good feeling? Are there existing conditions or situations which could contribute to low morale? Identify them. Are the avenues provided for internal communication between and among faculty and administrators adequate and satisfactory? Note: Since this can be a highly subjective area, take great care in making generalizations and in reaching conclusions. Whenever possible, rely on concrete solutions.

Gender and Diversity, Equity The visiting committee should make sure that the school has an established, written, board-approved and adopted policy of non-discrimination in all areas, and that the policies are carried out in actions and in attitudes. Special attention should be given to gender and racial distribution, and practices in employment, admissions, evaluation, promotion, and offices held, awards, and activities to insure gender and minority equity. There should exist a high level of “awareness” on equity issues. The visiting team member should examine the curriculum in relation to courses offered and textbooks studied and read to see if appropriate representation of women and minorities is present. Does the library collection show the same broad representation? Check on enrollment patterns in math/science classes and in fine arts classes. Are the sexes adequately represented in both? In Honors sections? Review awards won recently, and honors granted for evidence of equity. Do teachers in the classroom – consciously or unconsciously – show preference for one gender over another?

School Plant and Facilities Do the school plant and facilities adequately accommodate the school program? Is the plant adequately maintained with appropriate janitorial care? Is the school in compliance with all health and safety codes (asbestos, radon, lead, etc.)? Are health and safety primary concerns? Are boilers regularly inspected? Fire extinguishers properly maintained? If there is on-site food preparation, are health standards properly maintained? Adequate safety provisions, especially in labs and art rooms? Are written emergency procedures? Does the total facility enhance the school program? Does the school have an established policy and procedures regarding visitors entering the school? Note: Usually included in this report section is information regarding transportation and food service. Generally a brief description of the service provided, together with any commendations and important recommendations, is adequate for these to areas.

Student Services This general area includes several sub-areas; the team member may write a single unified report, individual reports, or a single report with specific divisions. Specific descriptive reference should be made to the provision for guidance/counseling services (or alternative procedures), the method of reporting student progress to parents, the conduct of testing programs together with the dissemination of test results and the filing of testing records, description of the college admissions program and college admissions records (if applicable) and a listing and very brief description of the various clubs, organizations, and activities available to students. This report usually also includes information regarding the athletic program unless it is specifically included in the Health/Physical Education report under academic program. Specific attention should be given to the provisions in place for student orientation, discipline, recognition, and assessment. In general, do the services provided live up to the promises of the school, and do they contribute in important ways to the realization of the school’s philosophy and goals?

Library/Media Center Describe the school library (or media center) as a total facility; location, access, hours, appearance, usage, circulation, etc. Assess the quality and quantity of the collection in three areas: print, subscription, and audio-visual. Is there

adequate representation of female and minority writers? Is each academic area and school division adequately represented in the collection? Are reference resources adequate? Describe briefly library policies and/or procedures regarding staffing, supervision, cataloging, budget, circulation, record keeping, acquisitions, book selection, etc.. Most importantly – is the quality, quantity, and diversity of the collection adequate for meeting students needs? NOTE Unless information regarding the application of technology to the library is covered in the report on Technology, this report should include information on the extent to which computer hardware and software are available and utilized in the library program.

School Advancement: The several areas under this report area may be presented as a single report, as separate reports, or as a single report with sub-divisions. Fund-raising should describe all of the school's regular and special efforts to raise funds over and above tuition for annual giving, special projects, an/or capital campaigns. It should also describe record keeping and thank you procedures. Some statistical information should be presented regarding level of participation of the various constituencies as well as information regarding endowment and foundation grants. Describe the personnel in this office and how the office operates. Do the people involved have job descriptions? Is there a Development Plan? Who is responsible for the marketing efforts of the school? Does the school effectively and honestly market itself? How is the school marketed? Describe the school's public relations efforts including the quality of various school publications. What is the image of the school within the community? Is the public perception of the school accurate and favorable? What attention does the school pay to its Alumni? Is there an alumni organization or association? Is it active and effectively involved? What is the level of alumni support, both in giving and in participation and other forms of support? Are appropriate alumni records kept?

Academic Program Areas: In a traditional report, the academic program areas are covered in separate reports, discipline by discipline, and perhaps (depending on the size of the school and of the visiting team) by school divisions. If the school has followed a non-traditional or alternative approach to its self-study of program, the visiting team should follow the format of the self-study. But regardless of the format followed, every visiting team report should introduce this section of the report with a report on Curriculum Overview. This report is to serve as an introduction to the individual subject area reports or other reports, which will follow. It should include general information describing the organization and content of the curricular program from the lowest to the highest grade level, and should address the specific goals and objectives of the curriculum as a whole. While the subject area reports reflect the vertical component of the curriculum and are micro in nature, this report should address the horizontal curriculum and be macro in nature. Does the total curriculum provide adequate depth and breadth without omissions or unnecessary duplication (scope and sequence)? Is there continuity? Interdisciplinary integration? Is there a reasonable balance among disciplines, and among standard components of learning?

Is provision made for the development of study skills? How are achievement and outcomes assessed? How is the curriculum reviewed and evaluated? Are the curriculum and the teaching methodologies utilized consistent with the school philosophy? (Please keep in mind that this report is of critical importance to the Evaluation Review Committee as it reviews the team report.) If Individual Learning Area Reports are written, they should provide in greater detail the course offerings at the various grade levels within each discipline. Information regarding the textbooks and other materials used should be provided, as well as information regarding the use of audio-visual aids and other instructional aids, including technology. What teaching methodologies are used? Are they consistent with the school's philosophy statement? Is there variety in the format of presentations? What is the level of student involvement and participation? Are provisions made for "special needs" such as tutoring, one-on-one instruction, honors or Advanced Placement sections, etc.? What evidence is there of student interest and achievement? Is student work appropriately displayed? Comment on the overall classroom appearance and atmosphere. Most importantly – is the academic program provided within this area or discipline congruent with the philosophy, goals, and objectives of the school? (See ISACS Standards for Membership – Section D: Program, Activities, and Student Services)