

“High-impact instructional leaders believe that success and failure in student learning is about what they, as teachers or leaders, did or didn’t do.”

John Hattie



ACS WASC Words 2018-2019

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ACCREDITING COMMISSION FOR SCHOOLS
Western Association of Schools and Colleges



ACS WASC Words 2018-2019

Mission

ACS WASC advances and validates quality ongoing school improvement by supporting its private and public elementary, secondary, and postsecondary member institutions to engage in a rigorous and relevant self-evaluation and peer review process that focuses on student learning.

Territory

ACS WASC extends its services worldwide to approximately 5,000 public, private, independent, church-related, and proprietary pre-K–12 schools. ACS WASC provides assistance to schools located in California, Hawaii, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas, American Samoa, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Fiji, Asia, and other parts of the world.



Thoughts from the Chair

Stephen Cathers | Chairperson, Accrediting Commission for Schools, WASC



Let's talk about continuous improvement! I am sure we all believe in continuous improvement theoretically, but I want to touch on the practical, day-to-day version of that concept. As school leaders, we often long for a day with no surprises or problems to solve. But let's let go of that for a minute and embrace the idea that change and

improvement go hand-in-hand with uncertainty and chaos. Healthy, continuously improving schools are not always comfortable places to relax and put our feet up!

I had an epiphany a number of years ago when attending a workshop on "living systems." The premise was that schools are best understood as living systems, not as mechanical systems. Living systems are able to adapt, self-organize, and self-regulate, if allowed to do that. In fact, living things must grow and change continuously if they are healthy. A mechanical system is predictable, unchanging, and has replaceable parts. Schools that are made to operate as mechanical systems do not improve or grow naturally; they have to be redesigned top-down. A school that operates as a living system, however, has a natural propensity to adapt and improve.

Henry Adams famously said in 1910, "Stable equilibrium is death." He was commenting on the second law of thermodynamics but speaking to historians; he was suggesting that the principle applies to all systems, including schools. That may mean that the day we feel like our school is running like clockwork and we can sit back with our feet up just might be the day our school is losing its edge or ability to innovate and address issues of our changing world.

I attended such a school back in the 1960s; very little changed, we won lots of football games, we made jokes about computer technology, students with disabilities were segregated, and we had no hippies. That may seem ridiculously archaic, but in our times, how are we embracing change and improving what we do? What assumptions do we make that might seem archaic in 50 years?

ACS WASC *Focus on Learning (FOL)* can help us all with that, I think. Basically, *FOL* requires improvement, and hopefully it is continuous. *FOL* demands that we monitor and are responsive to student needs. As leaders, we have a golden opportunity to embrace the notion that an ACS WASC self-study is perhaps the best opportunity we have to look at ourselves and identify ways we are "archaic." I think the feelings of instability and fear schools sometimes experience when an ACS WASC visiting team is scheduled to come may be our leadership's chance to help the system get it right. I guess this is an argument to embrace the process so that it will work as it should.

However, I am sure we all agree that continuous improvement should be an ongoing process that is part of our school system's fabric. We know that an improvement process can look many ways, but they all take a commitment of resources and willingness. My school's improvement cycle looks like a continuous loop of self-evaluation, planning, implementation, reflection, and re-direction. Most models are similar. They are also similar in that all models require leadership to make them happen. If we do not instigate, establish, and inspire continuous improvement, I do not think it will happen.

I think we can see that "resting on our laurels" in a world that is rapidly changing for our students is a formula for disaster. We need continuous improvement as a way of life in all our schools!





President's Update

Barry R. Groves, Ed.D. | President, Accrediting Commission for Schools, WASC



I chose to become involved with the Accrediting Commission for Schools, Western Association of Schools and Colleges (ACS WASC) because I believe in the *Focus on Learning* continuous improvement process as a way to improve learning for ALL students. I want to make a difference in the lives of students, especially those who

come from under-resourced backgrounds. Educators become involved with ACS WASC for a myriad of reasons including those listed below — but it is the philosophy behind the ACS WASC process that really gets me excited.

Schools have the primary responsibility for academic learning. Academic learning is best facilitated in environments that nurture cooperation, operate in a transparent manner, focus on academics, and involve continuous learning.

ACS WASC is not a compliance-driven accreditation activity. It is not driven by checklists or must haves or must dos. The process is focused on self-reflection and assistance. We believe that schools get better by looking inwardly: doing a deep dive self-study, followed by a peer review or validation report. There is no one path that is best for all schools, it is the entire local educational ecosystem that determines student outcomes. Every school wants to improve. We believe that by encouraging and supporting each one of the 5,000 schools accredited by ACS WASC, we help improve learning for ALL students.

ACS WASC accreditation is important because:

1. ACS WASC accreditation is recognized worldwide.
2. Certifies to the public that the school is a trustworthy institution of learning.
3. Validates the integrity of a school's program and student transcripts.
4. Fosters improvement of the school's programs and operations to support student learning.
5. Assures a school community that the school's purposes are appropriate and being accomplished through a viable educational program.
6. Provides a way to manage change through regular assessment, planning, implementing, monitoring, and reassessment.
7. The University of California requires a school to be accredited in order to establish and maintain an accreditation "a-g" course list.
8. The United States military application process requires that applicants graduate from an accredited secondary school to qualify as a high school graduate.
9. College students must matriculate from a high school that is fully accredited by ACS WASC to qualify for Cal Grants from the California Student Aid Commission.
10. Schools want to assure quality to students, their families, and the public; accreditation status assures that schools meet at least the threshold standards required.
11. Many public safety organizations require a diploma from an accredited secondary school as a minimum standard for their job application.
12. Schools use ACS WASC to help them articulate with their partner feeder schools.
13. Accreditation ensures to employers that graduates have successfully passed the requirements of an accredited institution.
14. California charter schools must be ACS WASC accredited to apply for charter school building funds.
15. Private, independent, charter, and parochial schools must be accredited to access California state student teachers.
16. Accreditation is important to ensure that courses are easily transferred among member institutions.
17. Some private individuals and institutions look for evidence of accreditation in approving school grants.
18. Accreditation is an achievement that is used in marketing to prospective families.
19. Foreign students must be enrolled in an accredited institution in order to be eligible to receive an I-20 U.S. Visa.
20. The ACS WASC process helps schools increase students' achievements through the continuous improvement process.

Student Learning and Well-Being: The End Result of School Improvement

Marilyn S. George, Ed.D. | Executive Vice President, Accrediting Commission for Schools, WASC

ACS WASC Focus on Learning Accreditation ∞ School Improvement and Change



Educators continually use the term “school improvement” and state that it is the most important process carried out by the school community to ensure student achievement. What is school improvement? Explanations in related literature stress a systematized ongoing process that involves planning, implementation, evaluation, and renewal guided by a plan that is understood and used by all the stakeholders.

ACS WASC *Focus on Learning (FOL)* accreditation is synonymous with school improvement and school change and its impact on student learning. The *FOL* process supports the critical aspects of instructional leaders that make a difference. As John Hattie points out, instructional leaders: 1) know the focus must be on learning and the impact of teaching; 2) understand that what teachers and leaders do and don’t impacts the degree of successful student learning; 3) use formative and summative assessment continually to determine impact; 4) value the importance of dialogue and listening to student and teacher voice; 5) create goals for leaders and teachers to “maximize” the desired student outcomes; and 6) create trusting environments where modification and changes are valued to achieve the desired goals.

Accreditation is not inspection, a report, teacher-focused, nor just individual/small group work. Rather accreditation is self-renewal and reflection and a collaborative self-evaluation of all aspects of the school’s program and its impact on student learning and well-being.

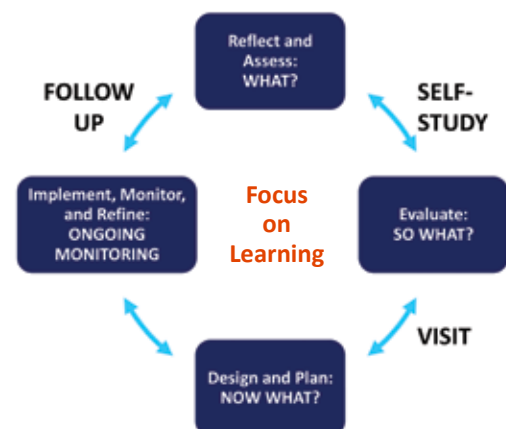
The philosophy of ACS WASC centers upon three beliefs: 1) a school’s goal is successful student learning, 2) each school has a clear purpose and schoolwide student goals, and 3) a school engages in external and internal evaluations as part of continued school improvement to support student learning.

Focus on Learning is an ongoing school improvement process that assists a school in taking an in-depth look at what currently exists and what needs to be improved in relation to student learning and the school’s program. Basic concepts addressed in this process focus upon student success in meeting schoolwide learner outcomes and academic standards, i.e., what all students should know, understand, and be able to do. They are:

- How well are all students achieving?
- Is the school doing everything possible to support high achievement for all its students?

The accreditation process is an ongoing, perpetual cycle of assessment, planning, implementing, monitoring, and reassessment. The process is guided and assisted by the self-study, visit, and follow-up. Annually, schools are expected to summarize the degree to which all students, including disaggregated subgroups, are accomplishing the schoolwide learner outcomes and academic standards. In addition, schools must review the progress on the current schoolwide action plan in relation to student achievement and make appropriate revisions. Essentially every year the schools’ stakeholders are involved in ongoing dialogue that includes:

- Analysis and ongoing dialogue about student learning (using the updated Student/Community Profile to guide stakeholder discussion).



Focus on Learning: A Reflective Cycle



Student Learning and Well-Being: The End Result of School Improvement — *continued*

- Analysis of progress on each aspect of the schoolwide action plan.
- Refinements of the schoolwide action plan as needed based on the analysis review of clarity of vision of goals.

Every five or six years, a school conducts an in-depth self-study to examine overall progress accomplished since the last self-study and the effectiveness of its current program based on the ACS WASC criteria and indicators in relation to student achievement. The completed self-study report is sent to the visiting committee members for careful study. Using the results of the visit, the school modifies and implements its subsequent schoolwide action plan and continues the cycle of improvement. The ACS WASC guiding principles provide the structure for a school's improvement and the evaluation of the results. The process empowers schools to:

- Ensure that there is a culture of involvement and collaboration of leadership, staff, students, teachers, parents, and other stakeholders.
- Ensure the culture nurtures and supports the well-being of all students.
- Demonstrate through its program there is evidence that its vision, mission, and schoolwide learner outcomes are accomplished by students.
- Evaluate students' achievement of the schoolwide learner outcomes and the academic standards.
- Use multiple ways to analyze data to demonstrate student achievement, including student and staff perceptions/interviews, examining student work, and observing students engaged in learning.
- Evaluate its program effectiveness in relation to 1) its impact on student learning based on the schoolwide learner outcomes, student learner needs, and academic standards; and 2) meeting an acceptable level of quality in accordance with the ACS WASC criteria.
- Align its prior and current prioritized findings to the schoolwide action plan focusing on areas of greatest student and therefore teacher and school needs.

- Implement and monitor the ongoing improvement results and the impact on student learning.

The leadership and stakeholders will find it helpful to ask the following questions about the guiding principles as they evaluate the effectiveness of the school's ongoing improvement process.

- Which of these guiding principles connect with what is happening at our school?
- How might we extend our thinking about practices at our school based on these guiding principles?
- What challenges might we consider as we evaluate our school and its identified needs and actions according to these principles?

As part of an ongoing school improvement, the accreditation process supports school leadership in the sharing and use of essential information about student learning and programs with all stakeholders in order to move forward in addressing the identified growth areas. Specific strategies and approaches within the ACS WASC ongoing cycle of improvement, i.e., self-study, full visit, annual progress reports, mid-cycle visits, and follow-up, reinforce this support. They include the following:

- The examination of the Student/Community Profile data, especially three-year trends and patterns regarding student demographic and achievement data and identification of critical learner needs and regular review of other sources of achievement data, such as examining representative student work samples.
- The expectation that all staff, students, and parents must be involved in the regular review and analysis of both formative and summative data about student achievement as the schoolwide action plan is reviewed and refined annually.

If the ACS WASC accreditation process is integral to a school's culture of learning, evaluation, and assessment, then the foundation is laid for the analysis and action to increase student learning. The process reminds the school's leadership that there must be a support system built into the culture that empowers teachers and other stakeholders to work together regarding student learning in an environment of openness and trust.



Furthermore, it enables a school to be critical and honest about what is working and what is not working to support increased student achievement. Such important analysis and dialogue builds capacity and coherence in the ACS WASC expectation that this is a “never-ending, non-hyperventilating improvement process.” The ACS WASC accreditation process and resulting status supports a school in this transparency about what needs to be done.

The accreditation process empowers a school to create a powerful plan, however, we all must realize that a schoolwide action plan that focuses on student achievement is not a “magic answer” just like one specific program and design is not necessarily the only answer. Indeed the plan is a roadmap in order to have the following occur:

- A shared, collaborative focus and commitment to student learning.
- Regular reflection and analysis of data-based progress.
- The continued building of the teaching and leadership capacity of all.

As a school develops its overall schoolwide action plan, there are questions that need to be asked to ensure it provides the direction and impetus for improved student achievement. Examples of such questions include:

- What specific data led to the rationale for each section of the action plan?
- How was this data obtained and analyzed?
- Does the action plan address the learning needs of all students as identified in the student/community profile and ongoing analysis of formative and summative data?
- What are realistic growth targets and benchmarks for each student subgroup?
- Through implementing the various sections of our schoolwide action plan:
 - What will be different for the students, e.g., specific subpopulations?
 - What is our visualization of the end result?

- How will we measure assessment of student progress?
- How do we modify the schoolwide action plan if there is no impact on improved student learning and/or well-being?
- Have we integrated the various initiatives into the schoolwide action plan that directly address student learning needs, i.e., staff development, technology?
- Have we created one “umbrella” plan focusing on student achievement? Have we aligned as needed with district, complex area, or state plans?
- Are resources being allocated to support the implementation and accomplishment of the action plan?

In summary, the ACS WASC process provides the internal structure that enables a school to be its own professional learning community that focuses on student achievement and takes action. Through the ACS WASC accreditation process a school is held accountable for demonstrating improved student learning. A school should have a schoolwide action plan that has evolved from this shared, collaborative focus and commitment to the desired student learning and a process for regular reflection and analysis of data-based student progress as it continually builds the teaching and leadership capacity of all. Overall, ACS WASC accreditation is a data-informed, decision-making process where the guiding principles drive increased student learning.

References

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Leadership, Coherence, and Continuous Improvement through Accreditation

Nancy Brownell | Director, Accrediting Commission for Schools, WASC



The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) provides a new vision for education in the United States reinforcing state goals to prepare all students for success in college and careers through rigorous, relevant learning opportunities within the context of high academic standards and whole child learning environments.

Mirroring these goals is the Accrediting Commission for Schools, Western Association of Schools and Colleges (ACS WASC) district/complex criteria developed to guide district conversations about student and school needs, internal coherence, and organizational commitment to learning, self-reflection, adaptation, and improvement.

California's journey to create a coherent local, state, and federal system of accountability and continuous improvement now expands to include a multi-tiered system of support to schools and districts based on the CA Dashboard results. The goal of support is to assist school districts and their schools to meet the needs of each student, with a focus on building capacity to implement innovative and evidence-based practices and effectively address inequities in student learning opportunities and outcomes.

In Hawaii, the State Department of Education's (HIDOE) Strategic Plan 2017–2020 is built upon the keys of ensuring that all students reach their fullest potential and attain their aspirations in the 21st century. Hawaii's goals focus on student success, staff success, and successful systems of support through the lens of school designs to prepare students for college and careers. Schools are moving forward with an emphasis on teacher collaboration and leadership to meet student needs, and stronger student voice and feedback to help inform decision-making.

Given the importance of organizational leadership and support to schools, ACS WASC piloted a district/complex accreditation process with the Antelope Valley Union High School District (AVUHSD) of 23,000 students, and the Hawaii Nānākuli-Wai'ānae Complex Area (NWCA) with 6,500 students. Schools in Hawaii are organized into K-12 geographic complexes with a superintendent

who reports to the state superintendent. Both AVUHSD and NWCA superintendents and leadership evaluated the effectiveness of the services, resources, and leadership provided to schools using an approach similar to the school accreditation process.

The leadership of AVUHSD, with full support from the board of trustees, had the express purpose of examining the degree to which the district builds leadership capacity; supports school success, student learning and continuous improvement; and then used the results to further refine the district's Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP) and other districtwide processes and procedures.

The NWCA leadership evaluated their cross-departmental support to help schools implement their Academic Plans for student success. What emerged from their conversations and analysis was the need to create a system to regularly monitor their support to schools and to gather more feedback and ideas for improvement from school staff and other stakeholders.

The visiting committees affirmed many of the findings from the self-studies, demonstrating that deep, authentic evaluations of district and complex area processes and practices are the foundation for continuous improvement. Both AVUHSD and NWCA leadership and teams reflected on the value of the process in building stronger bonds among staff members as they learned more about each other's programs and areas of responsibility. As evidenced by the district and complex area accreditation pilot processes, coherent organizational strategies and support to schools can be achieved when leaders and others in the system interact in intentional ways so that relationships and practices are focused on producing better learning outcomes. Continuous improvement of practices aimed toward student learning results and success strengthens collective understanding of collaborative work to improve teaching and learning for all and creates sustained coherence at the classroom, school, and district and complex levels.

Beyond the Traditional Classroom

Elizabeth Oberreiter | Director, Southern California Office, Accrediting Commission for Schools, WASC



“Without continual growth and progress, such words as improvement, achievement, and success have no meaning.” — Benjamin Franklin

Such words from Benjamin Franklin have a deep meaning for ACS WASC and its focus on continuous school improvement. Supplementary Education Programs (SEPs) and postsecondary schools play an important role in students’ lives throughout their academic journey and their future. They assist students in understanding academic areas that may have been missed in a classroom setting and beyond.

Supplementary Education Programs go beyond the traditional classroom bell and help students with a variety of educational programs such as: tutoring, test preparation, world languages, visual and performing arts, and even physical education. These programs integrate student support, expand learning, and create community engagement in an environment where students are often able to meet with teachers in a one-on-one setting or in small groups. Many SEPs work closely not only with families, but with their students as they collaborate to understand the needs of each and every student. ACS WASC visits dozens of SEPs every year and has seen a growth in these programs due to the tightening of budgets in many schools, resulting in many programs no longer being offered to students in the traditional classroom setting.

Supplementary Education Programs offer students life-changing experiences, instill confidence, and build on skills that were missed in the traditional classroom. In recent years, many teachers have taken an interest in SEPs in order to help students on a one-on-one basis. During self-study visits to SEPs, visiting committees have learned that teachers enjoy working at SEPs after hours and in the summer in order to help students academically and personally. Visiting committees have met with parents during SEP visits and parents mention the positive impact these programs have made in their children’s lives. Parents also mention that their children’s stress levels have decreased because many SEP programs focus on areas of specific need and not just general tutoring or general study skills.

Postsecondary schools offer adults (mainly 18-25 year olds) an opportunity to acquire a trade, a high school diploma, as well as offering other programs to help further their education and careers. Generally speaking, many think that the word “postsecondary” relates to community colleges, junior colleges and colleges and universities; however, for ACS WASC, the postsecondary school reflects adult education, adult ROPs, and adult correctional institutions as well. Many of these programs give adult students a second — or even third — opportunity to gain a better understanding of themselves and what is in their future.

Postsecondary schools support continuous educational improvement by not only offering traditional courses, but by offering programs that give postsecondary students a jump start to a new job and/or career. Many of the postsecondary schools that ACS WASC has visited offer students programs such as: construction, solar training, computer/technical skills, nursing, and a program that has seen a substantial increase lately is in the area of certified nursing assistants (CNAs). Postsecondary schools are continuously developing new programs that align to the current job market’s and society’s demands.

One of ACS WASC’s long-standing principles is to support improvement in all types of educational settings. Supplementary Educational Programs and postsecondary schools offer students opportunities to grow, shape, and transform their lives. Programs and schools such as these have also helped schools and districts create a collaborative educational community to help all students achieve academic and career success through a variety of many innovative approaches.





ACS WASC Words of Wisdom

Interview with Dr. Michael W. Kirst



In June 2018, ACS WASC President Dr. Barry R. Groves held an interview with California State Board of Education President, Dr. Michael W. Kirst.

Dr. Michael Kirst, is a professor emeritus of Education at Stanford University. He has been on the Stanford faculty since 1969. Kirst received his Ph.D. in Political Economy and Government from Harvard University. Before joining the Stanford University faculty, Dr. Kirst held several positions with the federal government, including staff director of the U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Manpower, Employment and Poverty, and director of Program Planning for Elementary and Secondary Education at the U.S. Office of Education. His latest books are *From High School to College* with Andrea Venezia (2004) and *Political Dynamics of American Education* (2009). Dr. Kirst is a member of both the National Academy of Education and the International Academy of Education.

What are your thoughts looking back at your four terms on the California State Board of Education (SBE)?

Kirst: The board that was first created by Governor Jerry Brown (in 1976) is light years away in influence, impact and stature in public recognition from my final two terms (which started in 2010). During the first two terms, Wilson Riles (the California State Superintendent of Public Instruction – SPI) told me that if you want staff, you can have staff, but they won't be allowed to talk to my staff. Jerry Brown abolished the position of Secretary of Education in his second term. The SBE now runs an office with a strong executive director. The SBE also has excellent relationships with the California Department of Education (CDE) and Tom Torlakson (current California State Superintendent of Public Instruction).

What role do you think that accreditation plays in California's educational system?

Kirst: For some time, we didn't think about accreditation or that it played an important role. I think that now accreditation plays an important role and that it can work well with the Single Plan for Student Achievement (SIPSA) and the Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP). It is on the right track to be working with the California Department of Education (CDE) and the California Consortium of Excellence in Education (CCEE). ACS WASC has good protocols that have the capacity to help our struggling schools. Accreditation could play an important future role in the state's implementation of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA).

What do site principals have to look forward to from the state in the future?

Kirst: Of course, they will be working with the new state assessment dashboard and LCAP. The new state assessment dashboard is being updated to be visually more helpful and will contain more detailed information on college and career and school environment indicators. The Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) will be the first statewide three-dimensions examination. In the future, we may also be developing a History/Civics examination that is proving to be more elusive than previously thought.

Are you optimistic about the future of California's public K-12 education system?

Kirst: I am optimistic because we have data that show that our stakeholders (the community, administrators, and teachers) are very supportive and enthusiastic that the state is headed in the right direction with common core and our assessment dashboard. I am concerned that we have not built enough capacity at the local level in leadership and teachers to meet the needs of our students and complex curriculum. In the future, I also think that we need to include special education as part of the regular education funding formulas.

What are you going to do now that you are retiring in December from the SBE?

Kirst: We have a new project at Stanford University named the "Future of Learning, Opportunity and Work" that is looking at California's workforce development for the 25 to 55 age group. There is little research in this area and I am excited to be one of the faculty associates on the project.

Dr. Fred Van Leuven: Thank You and Farewell

The Accrediting Commission for Schools, Western Association of Schools and Colleges (ACS WASC), honored Dr. Fred Van Leuven at the June 2018 Commission meeting and celebrated the many accomplishments he spearheaded during his five years as president of ACS WASC from 2013–2018. We would like to thank him for these accomplishments and his years of service with ACS WASC.

During his presidency, Dr. Van Leuven:

- Established a sustainable financial system that will support ACS WASC stability, improvement, and resilience in the coming years.
- Led the first formal evaluation study conducted by an outside research group that focused on the ACS WASC accreditation cycle of quality.
- Emphasized and facilitated processes on the use of vertically analyzed student data from elementary through secondary schools in districts and complex areas to support ongoing school improvement.
- Initiated district and complex area accreditation to support school accreditation and improvement in districts in California, Guam, and Hawaii.
- Improved ACS WASC procedures based on staff and constituent feedback and evaluation.
- Renewed and refined Memoranda of Understanding with educational affiliates.
- Refined overall ACS WASC systems and initiated a comprehensive technology plan to improve the efficiency, effectiveness, and reliability of the ACS WASC database and processes.
- Directed the effort to digitize ACS WASC records eliminating masses of stored documents and improving electronic access to school reports and records.
- Instituted procedures to ensure legal due process.
- Updated the *ACS WASC Bylaws and Policy Manual*.
- Facilitated the selling of the ACS WASC office building in Temecula and the subsequent relocation of the Southern California ACS WASC office to San Diego.





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(listed by the organizations they represent)

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Commission Update

The Commission is comprised of individuals representing the various constituencies of ACS WASC. The Commission convenes three times a year.

2019 Commission Meetings

Winter

January 28 – 29, 2019
Honolulu, HI

Spring

April 29 – 30, 2019
Burlingame, CA

Summer

June 24 – 25, 2019
Burlingame, CA

ACS WASC Commission Members

Members who left the Commission this June include: Erika Cruz, Suzanne Mulcahy, Sally Todd, Joel Wahlers, Laurel Salerno-White, and David Yoshihara. We deeply appreciate the excellent service provided by these Commissioners and wish them well in their continued service to others.

ACS WASC welcomes the following new Commission members: Danny Blas, Jon Fernandez, Kristie Flohra, Rodney Luke, Linda Norman, and Katherine Thorossian.



ACS WASC Commissioners at June 2018 Meeting

International Update

David Ottaviano, Ph.D. | Director of International Accreditation Services, Accrediting Commission for Schools, WASC



The power of ACS WASC accreditation is not only the ongoing improvement of learning, teaching, and opportunities for students, but the chance to help students be successful in their future endeavors as global citizens. One of the ACS WASC guiding principles impacting student learning is that schools develop a shared understanding of the mission

and schoolwide learner outcomes: what all student should know, understand, and be able to do to be globally competent. ACS WASC has integrated throughout its research-based international criteria an emphasis on preparing students to demonstrate global competencies. These include the following:

- The use of concepts, knowledge, skills, and languages of various disciplines to research current global issues.
- The understanding of the interdependence of economic, political, technological, environmental, and social systems worldwide.
- The understanding of multiple perspectives.
- The valuing of diversity.
- The ability to communicate with multilingual skills, through fluency in reading, writing, speaking and listening, and through the use of technologies.
- Engaging responsibly in action and service to improve conditions, both locally and globally.
- The ability to function effectively in an interdependent world.

ACS WASC has been involved in continual study in this area. Recently, new standards and practices have been advanced by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) via the internationally relevant Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). OECD has defined global competence as “the capacity to examine local, global and intercultural issues, to understand and appreciate the perspectives and world views of others, to engage in open, appropriate and effective interactions with people from different cultures, and to act for collective well-being and sustainable development.”

The OECD interest in measurement of this area represents a very large departure from prior sections which have only assessed academics. The inclusion on this year’s test of this dimension will redefine what is taught in schools regarding attitudes, values, and

ideals. An important standardized test departure is that PISA will be asking principals to rate their schools on the global competencies as noted below:

- Whether the curriculum includes global topics such as climate change and global warming, global health, or population growth.
- Whether the formal curriculum refers to global competence skills and dispositions, such as communicating with people from different cultures or countries or openness to intercultural experiences.
- Requests principals to report on the teachers’ general beliefs on how the school should handle ethnic diversity.
- Answer inquiries about specific practices for multicultural learning at the school level, such as teaching about the beliefs, customs, or arts of diverse ethnic and cultural groups that live in the country.
- Report his/her perception of teachers’ multicultural and egalitarian beliefs, such as the belief that students should learn as early as possible to respect other cultures.

What are the implications for schools and accreditation?

Schools will need to focus attention to student beliefs, values, attitudes, and practices. More social-emotional and values instruction is needed. Curricular modifications are necessary to inculcate these universal beliefs, values, and attitudes into everyday instruction. Groups like CASEL have already been working in this area. In his recent book *Boost Emotional Intelligence in Students*, Maurice Elias provided research-based, hands-on lessons, each focusing on critical Emotional Quotient concepts and centered on productive and respectful discussion. ASCD’s *Promoting Social and Emotional Learning: Guidelines for Educators* provides a sound basis for understanding how to teach tolerance and empathy.

The power of the accreditation process lies in providing the framework for guiding schools in strategies and approaches to prepare students better to understand and function in a world with people of many cultures. This includes faculty and counselors systematically inculcating global competencies for an inclusive world with all students at all levels and building understanding, empathy, and behavioral skills so students can function in a multicultural world with respect for the dignity of others and appreciation for their many cultural heritages. With this ideal, students will be better equipped to solve the complex problems of their future world.



ACS WASC Principles Lay the Path to Improved Student Learning

Barbara Parker | International Consultant, Accrediting Commission for Schools, WASC



The ACS WASC *Focus on Learning (FOL)* school improvement process is founded upon sound educational and change management principles, which have been validated over the past several decades by educational researchers such as John Hattie, Doug Fisher and Nancy Frey, and Robert Marzano.

ACS WASC Principles

Student learning improves when schools:

- Develop a shared understanding of the mission and schoolwide learner outcomes and intentionally plan opportunities for students to demonstrate progress toward them.
- Design and deliver curriculum, instruction, and assessment based on academic standards and schoolwide learner outcomes.
- Determine and demonstrate student progress in multiple ways and analyze data to adjust instruction and support student achievement.
- Evaluate program effectiveness according to research-based criteria.
- Determine, design, and implement schoolwide action plans, which are aligned with student, teacher, and school needs.
- Analyze ongoing improvement and demonstrate accountability on a regular basis so that the school and teachers can refine and align actions toward schoolwide goals and plans.
- Develop a culture of involvement and collaboration, including student voice.
- Deliver a culture that nurtures and supports well-being.

When a school diligently adheres to these principles, student learning improves, even if schools have very diverse demographics, curricular approaches, and mission statements.

A school in the Middle East follows a curriculum based on the Cambridge system and Islamic values. The school leadership identified the need to adhere to international standards and practices so their students could compete more successfully

in the global arena. Implementing the *FOL* principles required a shift in mindset and operational practices for many people at the school. While conducting their first ACS WASC *FOL* self-study, the leadership noticed positive changes in the level of professional discourse throughout the school. Many teachers commented on the valuable professional development they had gained through the *FOL* process. The leadership attributes the positive system-wide changes to the ongoing focused attention on the *FOL* criteria and indicators.

A start-up school in China used the *FOL* principles to establish guidelines for faculty meetings, which include conversations about student progress toward schoolwide learner outcomes. Teachers regularly visit one another's classrooms to observe students followed by discussions of visible indicators of student progress and suggestions for possible next steps. Initially some parents worried about their decision to enroll their children in a school whose educational approach was so different from the one they had known. As teachers and leadership regularly shared their findings with the parents, including plans for continued improvement, most parents became enthusiastic supporters. In addition to reporting findings, the school collects feedback from parents about how well their children apply the school's mission and schoolwide learner outcomes outside school.

A well-established school in Asia, which has a long waiting list for admission and whose students successfully enter highly sought-after universities around the world, decided to scrutinize their practices using the *FOL* principles and criteria. The leadership and teachers evaluated how well their students were internalizing the schoolwide learner outcomes and how effectively instructional plans provided opportunities for students to practice them. As a result of their diligence in adhering to the ACS WASC principles, the school discovered that it needed to make significant changes — even though no one had complained about the school's results and practices.

Adhering to the ACS WASC *FOL* guiding principles leads to the path to greatness. According to Jim Collins, the author of *Good to Great*: "The real path to greatness, it turns out, requires simplicity and diligence...it demands each of us to focus on what is vital—and to eliminate all of the extraneous distractions."

ACS WASC Membership, Accreditation Actions, and Visiting Committees, 2017–2018

ACS WASC Membership, 2017–2018

ACS WASC school membership continued to grow during the 2017–2018 school year. Currently, approximately 143 applicant schools are preparing for their initial accreditation visit with ACS WASC during the 2018–2019 school year.

| EVALUATION AREA | # OF SCHOOLS 2015–2016 | # OF SCHOOLS 2016–2017 | # OF SCHOOLS 2017–2018 |
|--------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| California | 3,969 | 4,000 | 4,054 |
| Hawaii | 323 | 360 | 361 |
| Out of State | 59 | 59 | 69 |
| Pacific Islands | | | |
| American Samoa | 16 | 22 | 22 |
| Federated States of Micronesia | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Guam | 44 | 49 | 53 |
| Marshall Islands | 5 | 5 | 6 |
| Northern Marianas | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Palau | 1 | 3 | 7 |
| Africa | 6 | 4 | 4 |
| Asia | 231 | 249 | 263 |
| Australia | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Europe | 4 | 6 | 7 |
| India | 2 | 1 | 2 |
| Mexico | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Middle East | 20 | 8 | 9 |
| TOTAL | 4,685 | 4,772 | 4,863 |

Accreditation Actions, 2017–2018

ACS WASC accreditation is based on an accreditation cycle of quality, with a self-study visit occurring every five to seven years. Please visit the ACS WASC website for additional details.

Self-Study Visits 812

Awarded accreditation

 Full accreditation 201

Full accreditation

 with a mid-cycle review 550

 2 year 48

 1 year 9

 No status given 4

Initial Visits 182

 Awarded initial accreditation 142

 Awarded candidacy status 34

 Denied candidacy status 6

Visiting Committees, 2017–2018

The 2017–2018 school year was a record year for visiting committees. Over 4,102 visiting committee chairs and members, many serving on multiple visits, participated on teams during this past school year. A special thanks to the chairs and members who served on the 1,969 teams during the school year! See page 18 for information on serving on a visiting committee.

 Self-Study Visits 812

 Initial Visits 182

 Mid-cycle Visits 530

 Probationary Visits 44

 Progress Visits 27

 Special Visits 15

 International Mid-cycle Visits 29

 CIS Preparatory Visits 13

 Substantive Change Visits 310

 Reinstatement Visits 2

 Appeal Visits 5

Total Committees 1,969



Office Update

Northern California Burlingame Office



L-R: Michael McCormick, Frances Rivette, Christian Punzalan, Rosalina Abello, Francesca Lorenzo, Kristen Chow, Cynthia Newton, Alexandria Silva, Christine Toti, Ari Nishiki-Finley, Albert Chan, Joanne Cacicedo, Kelly Richards, Elaine Wong, Alice Hauser, William Blake, Susan Lange

Southern California San Diego Office



L-R: Luigi Zoni, Denise Jagoda, Wendy Parcel, Alicia Hutchinson, Susan Weinsanker, Elizabeth Oberreiter, Brian Jensen

Promotion



Ms. Elizabeth Oberreiter has been promoted to director in the ACS WASC Southern California office. Ms. Oberreiter has served as an ACS WASC Southern California Coordinator for the past three years. She has over 30 years of experience in education and has served in various capacities from classroom teacher to CEO of an online educational organization.

Her background in public, private, religious, and charter schools has assisted the ACS WASC Southern California office in building bridges with schools and visiting committees. Ms. Oberreiter’s experience has helped schools in strategic planning, recruitment, curriculum, instruction, and data analysis. Her knowledge of the ACS WASC process has helped schools understand school improvement, increasing student achievement, and using the schoolwide learner outcomes as a tool for teaching and learning. Her passion for the ACS WASC process is evident during accreditation visits as well as in her interactions with colleagues, schools, and educators.

Retirements

ACS WASC had a number of staff retirements this year. President Dr. Fred Van Leuven retired after serving for five years. Ms. Judy Abbott retired after serving at ACS WASC for over 31 years. Dr. Ginger Hovenic and Mrs. Emily Barton in the San Diego office retired as well. We wish everyone the best!



Passing

It is with the greatest of sadness that we share the passing of Dr. Katherine Frazier, our friend and colleague from the ACS WASC Southern California San Diego office, following a prolonged illness.

New ACS WASC Staff



Ms. Rosalina Abello joined ACS WASC in June 2018 as the new executive assistant to the ACS WASC president in the Burlingame office. She replaced Judy Abbott, who was with ACSWASC for over 30 years. Rosalina has a B.S. in Business Administration with concentration in Accounting. She spent eight years at

the non-profit Association of California School Administrators (ACSA), working in the Finance Department where she spent over three years providing administrative support to the CFO. She more recently worked as an executive administrator at Visa Inc. in Foster City and at Actelion Pharmaceuticals US, Inc., a biotech company, in South San Francisco. When Rosalina is not working, she enjoys traveling and spending time with her children, family, and friends.



Dr. Susan Weinshanker joined ACS WASC in July 2018 as a coordinator in the Southern California ACS WASC office. She has pursued a path that focuses on developing, implementing, and sustaining learning systems since the beginning of her career in education. Dr. Weinshanker has been successful forming and leading teams

to develop support programs, which has led to refining teacher pedagogy. This success has been accomplished at all levels of education — from elementary through university, educator through administration. Since 1992, she has participated on over 35 ACS WASC accreditation site visits. She has also trained administrators and site staff throughout the San Diego Unified School District, where she worked for the past 17 years. With her undergraduate degree in Biochemistry from Rutgers University, her masters' degree from Kean University and her Ed.D. in Educational Administration from USIU, Dr. Weinshanker is an engaged lifelong learner. When she is not teaching, Dr. Weinshanker enjoys spending quality time with family and friends as well as exploration and investigation through travel and discovery. She is a scuba diving enthusiast, a bicyclist who participates in organized charity rides, and is passionate and open to new challenges and adventures.



Dr. Wendy Parcel joined ACS WASC in July 2018 as a coordinator in the Southern California ACS WASC office. She has been an assistant director the last 11 years for Julian Charter School, an independent study non-classroom based charter school. Before that time, Dr. Parcel worked for the Sweetwater Union High

School District for 16 years, first as a classroom teacher, and then as a teacher on special assignment in the EDTEC Office. For the past decade, Dr. Parcel has also been an adjunct professor at San Diego State University where she teaches Learning Design and Technology to practicing classroom teachers. Since 1999, she has participated on many ACS WASC accreditation site visits. In her spare time she likes to spend time with her husband and adult son, as well as go on long walks and read.





Accrediting Commission for Schools Western Association of Schools and Colleges

Serving on an ACS WASC Visiting Committee



Accrediting Commission for Schools, WASC

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ACS WASC Overview

The Accrediting Commission for Schools, Western Association of Schools and Colleges (ACS WASC), a world-renowned regional accrediting association, provides assistance to schools in California, Hawaii, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas, American Samoa, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Fiji, Asia, and other parts of the world; currently serving approximately 5,000 schools.

ACS WASC's philosophy centers upon three beliefs: a school's goal is successful student learning; each school has a clear purpose and schoolwide student goals; and a school engages in external and internal evaluations as part of ongoing school improvement to support high-quality student learning.

Accreditation is integral to a school's perpetual cycle of assessment, planning, implementation, and monitoring. The ACS WASC accreditation process fosters excellence in elementary, secondary, and adult education by encouraging school improvement. ACS WASC accreditation recognizes schools that meet an acceptable level of quality, in accordance with established, research-based ACS WASC criteria.

Visiting Committees

ACS WASC accreditation visits range from one-day initial visits to three- or four-and-½ day full self-study reviews.

Visiting committees are composed of two to eight members, one of whom is the chairperson. A committee is comprised of educators representing a wide range of educational experience and expertise. Training workshops are provided and new members work closely with experienced chairs.

Visiting team members review the ACS WASC criteria and study reports from the school in preparation for the visit. During the visit, the team observes the school in operation and other evidence; reviews student performance data; observes students engaged in learning; and dialogues individually and collectively with administrators, teachers, students, and other stakeholders. The visiting team then prepares a report outlining the team's findings for the school and ACS WASC Commission.

Why Serve?

- Learn about a variety of educational strategies, approaches, and practices
- Observe programs in action
- Develop and cultivate new professional relationships
- Provide insights and reflections as a fellow educator
- Work together to ensure the high achievement of all learners
- Demonstrate one's professional commitment to quality education
- Give back to the educational community

"Serving as a visiting team member is by far the best professional development opportunity available in education today. Taking the time to see a school from all facets does so much for the perspective that we bring back to our own sites."

Shawn Marshall, ACS WASC VC Member
Riverside, CA

Please contact our office or visit the ACS WASC website: www.acswasc.org for further information
Go to the ACS WASC Portal: <https://webportal.acswasc.org/> to sign up.

Accrediting Commission for Schools
Western Association of Schools and Colleges



ACS WASC Words 2018-2019

ACCREDITING COMMISSION FOR SCHOOLS WESTERN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

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