

WASC Words 2012

I'm examining the mind frames that seem to underpin successful teaching and learning—and the most crucial is "Know thy impact."
~John Hattie



Volume 24, Issue 1 | September 2012



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Western Association of Schools and Colleges
ACCREDITING COMMISSION FOR SCHOOLS

WASC Mission

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.

WASC Philosophy

The Commission believes that the goal of any school should be to provide for successful student learning. Programs encompassing both the cognitive and affective components of learning should foster human growth and development and enable students to become responsible, productive members of the school community and our democratic society. Each school should develop a school purpose to reflect its beliefs. For ongoing program improvement, each school should engage in objective and subjective internal and external evaluations to assess progress in achieving its purpose.

WASC Territory

The Commission extends its services to public and private schools located in California, Hawaii, Guam, American Samoa, Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, and to American and international schools in Asia and the Pacific.

Thoughts from the Chair

Harlan E. Lyso, Ph.D. | Chairperson, Accrediting Commission for Schools, WASC



What an incredibly special year this is for the Accrediting Commission for Schools, Western Association of Schools and Colleges (ACS WASC), as we celebrate 50 years of supporting schools in their school improvement efforts. The establishment of a formal accreditation process has for

50 years provided the broader community with assurance that independent educational professionals have assessed individual schools and 1) affirmed the good work that is being done in providing students with a quality educational experience; and 2) assisted the school in its efforts to enhance further the quality programs and services that enable students to achieve their highest potential. This second outcome, continual school improvement, lies at the core of all that WASC does. It underscores the fact that school excellence involves a continuing process of growth and improvement — even for the most successful schools — rather than being a static goal.

Over the past 50 years, the number of WASC accredited schools has continued to grow, and the accreditation process has been enhanced. The appropriately named “*Focus on Learning*” accreditation protocol that WASC developed truly does focus on how schools can even more effectively enhance student learning. It has served as a model accreditation process for any institution or organization seeking to ensure that all students are challenged to achieve at the highest level. Recognizing the value of the *Focus on Learning* process, in recent years several nations have asked WASC to work with them in the development of accreditation processes to be implemented within their national schools.

Clearly, WASC has much to be proud of as we celebrate our golden anniversary. School improvement is a long-term process that involves adaptations to changing conditions. WASC will not be resting on its previous accomplishments. Rather, it will continue to enhance and develop services that will further support member schools. Even as we begin our second 50 years, WASC’s

focus is decidedly on the future. At the June Commission meeting the decision was made to move from an accreditation “term” to accreditation “status.” This decision, which will be explained to member schools in much greater detail, effectively takes the focus off of the number of years of accreditation that a school is granted; instead, the focus is on strategies that will further enhance student learning. The Commission is also exploring how it may effectively serve a broader range of schools internationally, but only insofar as this can be accomplished without diminishing in any way the services that are provided to WASC accredited schools.

We are truly fortunate that the WASC staff is talented, dedicated, and forward thinking. In addition to the dedicated efforts of the WASC staff, the WASC accreditation process relies heavily on volunteers serving on Visiting Committees. In these economic times, schools must necessarily examine expenditures thoroughly; funding meaningful professional development opportunities is especially challenging. There is likely no better nor more economical professional development available than serving on a Visiting Committee. Schools benefit from the volunteer efforts of Visiting Committee members. A WASC visit provides professional development AND service to individual schools — a true “win-win” scenario. I would invite school leaders to actively encourage their professional staff members to participate in WASC training and to serve on Visiting Committees.

As we celebrate our 50th anniversary, WASC can look back on its rich history with a great deal of pride. Yet the future will assuredly hold both challenges and opportunities which will impact how and what we do. Our capable staff in both our Burlingame and Temecula offices, complemented by an incredibly dedicated ACS WASC Commission, ensures that we will be celebrating many more successes in the future. I am honored to work with people who truly understand schools and focus on what is best for our students. I look forward to the coming school year confident that our member schools will continue to be well served.

Executive Director's Update

David E. Brown, Ph.D. | Executive Director, Accrediting Commission for Schools, WASC



Celebrating 50 Years

The WASC Commission celebrated 50 years of WASC accreditation work with schools in California, Hawaii, Pacific Islands, and countries of Asia at our Commission gathering in June. We should all be proud of both the growth and the accomplishments of this organization over the last

half century. Continuing partnerships with so many public and private organizations speak to the value to schools and students that emerges from the WASC process. I feel grateful to have had a small part in the evolution of an organization that truly provides added value. Thank you to all of you who have served in this important cause. The critical importance of having accreditation work done by those who have “boots on the street” in our schools cannot be overstated. Thank you seems somewhat trite when one considers the incredible number of hours that so many of you have given, but thank you nonetheless.

Honoring the Founders of WASC

I wish to acknowledge the great work of those who helped create the WASC construct over 50 years ago. Their foresight and willingness to pioneer a process that supports quality improvement in public and private schools is most commendable. It has been delightful to follow in their footsteps. I would also suggest that their efforts have been significantly strengthened over the years by the dedicated efforts of over 250 ACS WASC Commission members and enthusiastic and capable WASC staff. Clearly, we have ample justification for celebrating the value and the achievements of the accreditation process in this our 50th year.

New “Status” Approach

The ACS WASC Commission formally adopted a change in policy and procedures that we believe will strengthen our process and support stronger focus on each school's best use of the *Focus on Learning* protocol. Rather than assigning “terms” for accreditation, we will now refer to a school's accreditation “status.” We hope to reinforce the notion that accreditation operates on a six-year cycle of quality.

Under the new approach, the ACS WASC Commission can grant accreditation status with one of the following options:

- ▶ Six-year accreditation with a required mid-cycle progress report
- ▶ Six-year accreditation with a required mid-cycle one-day visit and progress report
- ▶ Six-year accreditation with a required mid-cycle two-day visit and progress report
- ▶ Probationary accreditation for one year, for schools that do not sufficiently meet the WASC criteria.

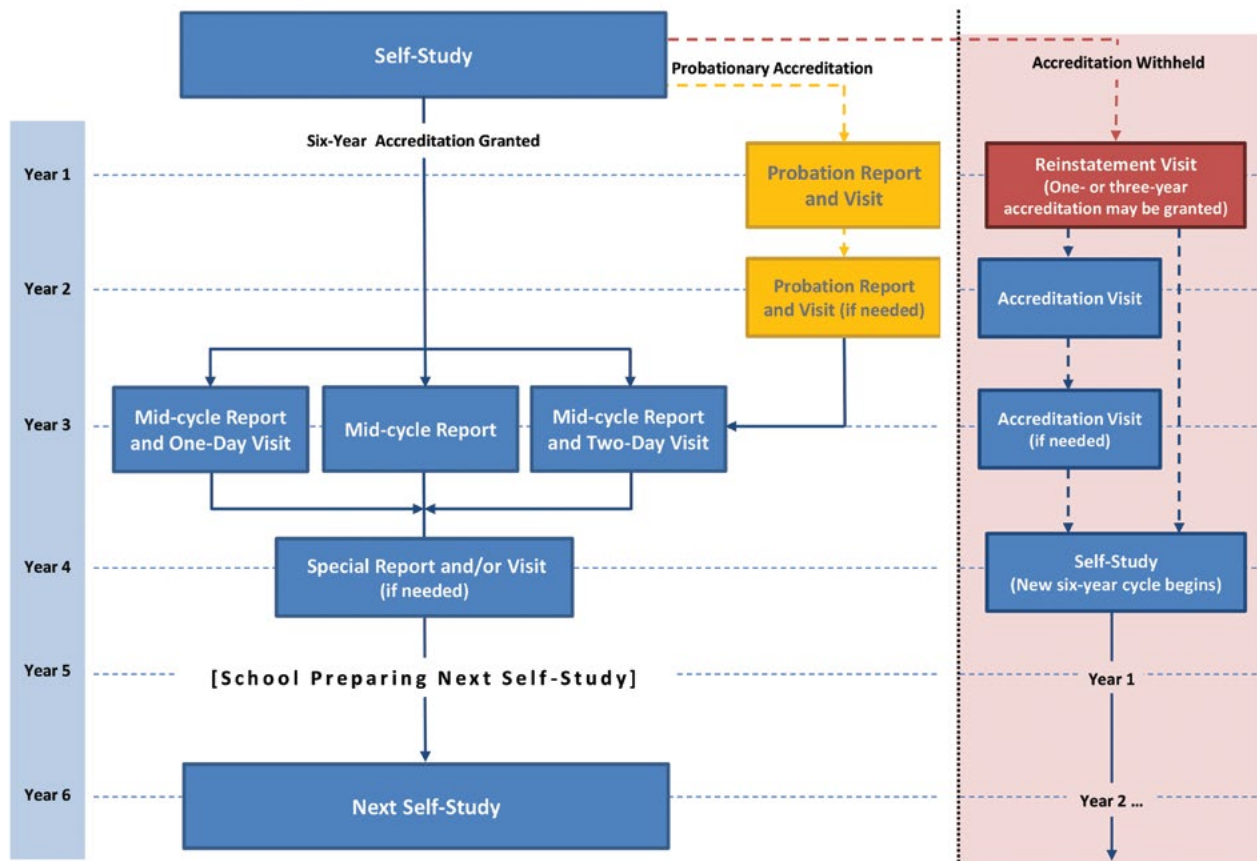
In extremely serious circumstances, accreditation may be withheld.

The philosophy behind the changes involves a fundamental commitment to serving purposes of school improvement and ultimately to improved learning for students. Each school, center, or learning institution should be primarily focused on attending to their individual action plan, which functions as a guide in support of improved student achievement. Additional details regarding the new “status” approach will be shared in various communications this fall as well as with individual schools and members in concert with member, school, and chair trainings.

The Glass Is Nearly Full

From time to time in education, and particularly at the present time, it is not difficult to see our glass of resources as anything more than half full. Nonetheless, I would submit that at this time when educators have to be unusually imaginative, innovative, and resourceful, the quality of instruction and service to students continues to be very strong. It is a huge credit to the many educators who refuse to deliver a “clear political message” that the children we serve are not being provided quality experiences. I fully

appreciate the temptation that we have to more effectively demonstrate how impacted schools are due to the difficult fiscal conditions forced upon us, so forging ahead with a “can do” attitude at this time is highly commendable. Schools are grateful for the work of WASC volunteers. So many of you tirelessly serve on visiting teams providing schools with expert insight and confirmation of the excellent work being in done in the public and private schools of the WASC region. Congratulations and thanks to you all.



WASC Accreditation Status Process

The WASC Accreditation Cycle of Quality — A Focus on High-Quality Student Learning for ALL

Marilyn S. George, Ed.D. | Associate Executive Director, Accrediting Commission for Schools, WASC



In spring 1987, the setting was the Sheraton Palace Hotel in San Francisco. The event was the 25th anniversary of WASC. As recorded in the *History of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, 1962-1987*, the message shared that day was very clear:

“WASC has been a vital force in the development of education at all levels.”

For the subsequent 25 years, as the Associate Executive Director, I would unconditionally affirm that this statement still reflects the work of WASC. We thank all the educators and partners throughout the WASC region for their contributions, dedication, and commitment to the ongoing development and refinement of the WASC accreditation process over these past 50 years. Truly, this has been a “grassroots” endeavor that is continuing as we focus on high-quality student learning for all.

At the time of the 25th anniversary, WASC was using several joint processes; one of which was WASC/CDE *Pursuing Excellence*. As a result of these processes, WASC leadership, the Commission, and regional educators began to discuss revising and refining the accreditation process. The Commission and revision committees that included public and private schools discussed important thinking about education in the 21st century, school change, learning and teaching, organizational development and leadership, self-evaluation, accountability, and results-oriented processes. Examples of references used were writings by Michael Fullan, Carl Glickman, Peter Senge, and Phillip Schlechty.

The revision committees centered their work on two overarching concept questions:

1. How are students achieving?
2. Is the school doing everything possible to support high achievement of all students?

What evolved was the WASC *Focus on Learning (FOL)*, a dynamic self-evaluative process that became widely accepted as integral to the core of education — successful student learning. The resulting WASC accreditation principles and criteria, embedded within the *FOL* process and reflected in the WASC Accreditation Cycle of Quality, enable a school to demonstrate:

- ▶ Accomplishment of its vision, mission, and schoolwide learner outcomes: What all students should know, understand and be able to do in order to demonstrate global competencies or 21st century skills, e.g., globally minded citizens and creative and critical thinkers.
- ▶ High achievement of all students in relation to schoolwide learner outcomes and academic standards.
- ▶ Use of multiple means of data analysis regarding student achievement, including student and staff perceptions, examining student work, and observing students engaged in learning.
- ▶ Evaluation of the effectiveness of the program and operations through analysis of evidence in relation to 1) the impact on student learning based on schoolwide learner outcomes, critical learner needs and academic standards; and 2) meeting an acceptable level of quality in accordance with the WASC criteria — the “So What?” question.
- ▶ Alignment of a schoolwide action plan to the prioritized growth areas supporting high achievement of all students.
- ▶ Ongoing improvement/accountability, i.e., the WASC Accreditation Cycle of Quality — stakeholder involvement in annual analysis of student achievement and other data, review of action plan progress, and refinement of the schoolwide action plan reflecting impact on student learning.
- ▶ Total involvement and collaboration of all stakeholders.

The *Focus on Learning* principles have regularly been reviewed by the Commission based on research and input from its constituents and partnering associations; the principles reflect all aspects of

an effective foundation for change. *Focus on Learning* supports what Tony Wagner emphasized in *The Global Achievement Gap* — schools must define the meaning of an educated person in the 21st century and ensure that students are achieving the essential skills.

The numerous educational associations with whom WASC collaborates have valued these *FOL* principles within their joint WASC processes. The associations and schools also have appreciated the flexibility of the *FOL* model process as each school is unique.

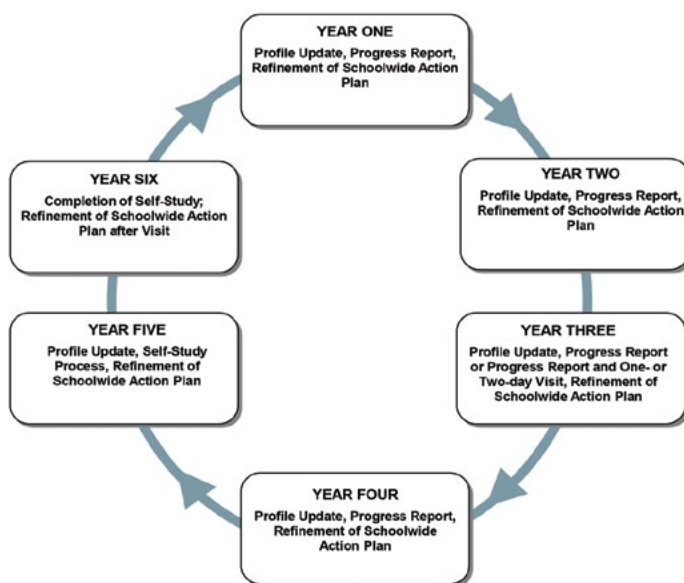
As WASC celebrates its first 50 years of being a “vital force,” it is already moving forward with further refinements to ensure the WASC Accreditation Cycle of Quality remains relevant, effective, and efficient. Some of the ongoing initiatives centered upon the core work of the self-study, the visit, the follow-up, and the training/coaching include:

- ▶ Increased emphasis on the schoolwide action plan as integral to the Accreditation Cycle of Quality.
- ▶ Refinement of the *FOL* process based on input from the constituency and research-based emphases:
 - Increased training/support/strategies for assessing student achievement of schoolwide learner outcomes, critical learner needs, and standards through multiple sources of data.
 - Fine tuning of the WASC criteria, indicators, and analytical prompts and streamlining the tasks.
 - The increased use of electronic tools and templates for the accreditation process, such as the use of Google Docs (Drive) and Dropbox.
 - Expansion of coaching and support through the use of WASC liaisons and additional training through synchronous and asynchronous webinars for all aspects of the WASC process.

Dr. Linda Darling-Hammond stated in her book, *The Flat World and Education*: “Creating schools that enable all children to learn requires the development of systems that enable all educators and schools to learn.” In addition, Dr. Bryan Godwin, the author of *Simply Better: Doing What Matters Most to Change the Odds for Student Success*, shares examples of five key principles to help all students be successful learners. This “What Matters Most Framework” highlights: “1) guarantee challenging, engaging,

and intentional instruction; 2) ensure curricular pathways for success; 3) provide whole-child student supports; 4) create high-performance school cultures; and 5) develop data-driven ‘high-reliability’ systems”

The examples above provide evidence confirming that the WASC Accreditation Cycle of Quality, with the inherent WASC criteria and principles, is a powerful system and foundation for a vigorous process that empowers the school’s stakeholders to assess its effectiveness in generating meaningful learning for all students and school improvement. That is why we like to think that WASC also means “We Are Student-Centered.”



WASC Accreditation Cycle of Quality

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WASC — The Next Fifty Years

Lee Duncan, Ed.D. | Associate Executive Director, Accrediting Commission for Schools, WASC



Celebrating the 50-year milestone of WASC is exciting indeed! WASC has grown into a leading institutional accrediting agency that impacts thousands of schools all over the world. During the past 50 years, WASC has watched innumerable education fads, reforms, and innovations come and go. In the midst of the

constantly changing educational landscape, however, WASC has stood firm on three unchanging core principles:

1. Quality teaching is the most important component in education.
2. A focus on student learning is the key ingredient to a change-producing accreditation process.
3. Ongoing school improvement process is essential; it fosters the cycle of quality supported by WASC.

As WASC celebrates its significant accomplishments and growing worldwide influence, it finds itself in a fast-changing educational environment that will require agile adaption in the years ahead. How students learn, what students learn, and what curricular materials they use is a moving target. The rapid growth of international schools is creating a new educational paradigm that must be addressed. And, if global changes in education are not enough, financial unrest has forced many states and local districts to dramatically cut education programs and services. This is the changing future that WASC will face.

It is fitting that WASC celebrates its 50 years of service to schools. It is, however, also fitting that certain questions be asked: “How will WASC change in the next 50 years?”; “What will WASC need to do to maintain its leadership position in the field of accreditation?”; and “How will WASC respond to the dramatic changes in education?”

It is impossible to predict education 50 years from now, but there are at least four critical issues that WASC will face in the near future.

The first critical issue that WASC will face is the changing nature of the education process itself. The major factors that will impact education include:

- ▶ Growth of new types of schools: charter, virtual, and international schools; private learning communities; and small specialty schools that meet specific needs of learner subgroups.
- ▶ Online education options that will impact all schools.
- ▶ Continuously shifting demographics — transitory student population, increasing ESL population.
- ▶ Smorgasbord learning in high schools — multiple options, multiple choices by students.
- ▶ Integration of 21st century learning skills into teaching and learning processes.
- ▶ Expanded learning needs — ESL, special needs, larger classrooms with increasing diversity.
- ▶ Lack of financial resources to provide needed educational services and programs.

“Change” is the first and most challenging issue that WASC will face in the coming years. Many students are finishing high school in three years and entering college as sophomores through concurrent credits, online credits, and AP classes. Students now desire to move seamlessly through multiple school options to match their individual learning interests and goals. Budget cuts threaten school improvement. Teachers wonder about the security of their jobs. Students wonder what kind of educational options they will have to prepare for their careers. Parents wonder how to find the right school with the right teachers who will spark an interest in learning for their children.

The second critical issue facing WASC is how to continue to use evolving technologies effectively to increase the ease and efficiency of the accreditation process. WASC is using technology to streamline the accreditation process of gathering data and creating reports online. Technology holds great promise in

refining and clarifying the accreditation process to make it more intuitive, collaborative, and user-friendly. The end goal is to increase the value and impact of the WASC process for all schools.

The third critical issue for WASC to address in the coming years is the need to allow the *Focus on Learning* accreditation process to influence the national discussion on how to reform education in America. There are many committees, Governor’s task forces, and reform summits; yet, national consensus is hard to reach. The United States will be challenged in the next 50 years to maintain a position of global leadership in education. It is critical that WASC be involved in the education debate and help shape educational reform and improvement through its accreditation expectations. The position of “accreditor” can be used as a powerful voice in education discussions in the future.

The WASC process — serious school self-evaluation supported by peer review, and consummated with a vibrant action plan — is an ongoing school improvement process that is transformational!

The fourth critical issue facing WASC is the need to inspire. School classrooms are growing in size and complexity; there are more and more individual learning needs within classes that teachers must address. Differentiated instruction is not only preferred, it is now absolutely needed just to survive. It takes a very talented teacher, full of energy and passion, to bring meaningful academic growth to all students in the classroom. More than ever, students need to be inspired to learn, and teachers need to learn to inspire!

It is appropriate to close this look into the future with praise for those faithful educators who have led WASC in the past and for Dr. David Brown and Dr. Marilyn George who lead us in the present. To all the leaders of WASC — past and present — we say thank you for your wisdom and foresight; you are responsible for what WASC has become in the past 50 years. Now the challenge is to build on what has already been accomplished and go forward with boldness, passion, and purpose. May we all pledge to make it so!

Accreditation Actions, 2011–12

WASC accreditation is based on a six-year cycle, with a full self-study occurring every six years. Please visit the WASC website for additional details.

Full Self-Study Visits

Awarded full terms	564
6 year	143
6 year with a midterm review	413
5 year	8
Awarded other terms	186
3 year	158
2 year	22
1 year	3
No term given	3

Three-Year Term and Limited-Term Revisits

Awarded terms on revisits	186
3 year	134
2 year	16
1 year	36

Initial Visits

Awarded initial term of accreditation	110
Awarded candidacy status	62
Denied candidacy status	7
No term given	—

Committee Statistics, 2011–12

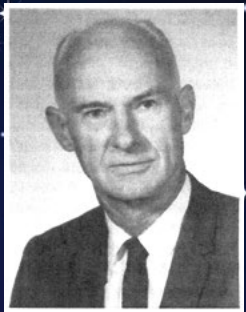
The 2011–2012 school year was another active year for Visiting Committees. Nearly 3,300 volunteers, many serving on multiple visits, served on teams during this past school year. A special thanks to the committee chairs and members who served on 1,478 teams during the previous school year! Please visit the WASC website for information on volunteering to serve on a Visiting Committee.

Full Self-Study Visits	751
Initial Visits	179
SEP Previsit	6
Three-Year Term Revisits	153
Midterm Review Visits	256
Midterm Return Review Visits	6
Limited-Term Revisits	32
Special Visits	14
Asia Midterm Visits	11
CIS Preparatory Visits	5
CIS Five-Year Renewal Visits	2
Expanded Substantive Change Visits	8
Substantive Change Visits	59
Validation/Appeals Visits	3

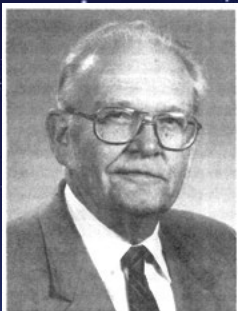
Total Committees1,478



Leslie Hedge
Executive Director
1962–68



J. Wesley Berry
Executive Director
1968–75



Lyle E. Siverson
Executive Director
1975–84



Don E. Halverson
Executive Director
1984–92

WASC Golden Jubilee

At the WASC Golden Jubilee, past and present Executive Directors and Commissioners celebrated two former Executive Directors share their experiences and reflections on accreditation.

My first experience with WASC began in 1962 when one of the founders and the first Executive Director of the Accrediting Commission for Schools, Leslie Hedge, asked me to accompany him on a candidate visit. Subsequently, I served annually on many different types of visits. When my predecessor, Dr. Lyle Siverson, retired, I became the Executive Director.

The Accrediting Commission for Schools of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges has been very successful since its inception. A major factor in this success has been the employment and support of veteran educators who believed in change rather than the status quo, and who were willing to keep the focus on student improvement through constant evaluation of the learning process.

My experiences were many and varied. I recall the time that the California Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Wilson Riles, wanted us to become part of the state school system or at least work out some arrangement for shared visits and studies. We worked with the state in some aspects of their Elementary School Improvement Project.

Another interesting experience was when several of the teachers at a private school enlisted the support of a Los Angeles television station in trying to discredit their school, especially the school's administration. We were advised of the issue and were able to help defuse the situation in spite of the television hoopla. We were also able to convince the owners and operators that there was some merit in the teachers' position, and we were able to help the school make some significant changes.

The overseas school visits were always interesting; here are some memorable anecdotes:

- A candidate visit to a school in Thailand during the heat of the Vietnam War. My wife and I were not permitted to mix with the other passengers but were picked up as the plane began to taxi to the runway. The students were not allowed to play on the playground because of the cobras. The cafeteria was also the officers club where we ate as the flyers returned from their bombing missions to Laos and Vietnam. (It took me back to my own days as a B-25 pilot during WW2.)
- A school in a copper mine area in the Irian Jaya section of Indonesia (once known as Dutch New Guinea) where the natives wore only grass skirts and gourds and dug for yams around the compounds.
- The realization that in many of the schools money was not a problem. An example was the issuance of a computer to each student as he/she enrolled in one particular international school. Their new high school was paid for in cash before it was built.

Many times I have been asked which schools were the best. My answer was always, "where the money was; not whether the school was public or private." The best school I ever saw was a public school and the worst was a private school to which accreditation was denied. It wasn't how the school was funded or by whom. It was good people with ample funds to provide the resources and hire the quality teachers and administrators to implement the programs they knew to be successful.

I rate my almost nine years with the Commission as the most rewarding of my 42-year career in the education business. Working with educators from all kinds of schools, public, private, or parochial, all striving to help schools improve so that their students could realize their highest potential often under great odds really continually inspired me. If "work" can be "fun" as well as rewarding, striving with the quality educators in WASC is such a place.

Don E. Halverson
ACS WASC Executive Director
1984–1992

50 years of fostering excellence in schools. To commemorate the 50th anniversary of WASC,

I became Executive Director of ACS WASC in January 1993, just six years after the celebration of the 25th anniversary of WASC. My first awareness of WASC was in 1964, when as a new teacher in California, my school was just completing the process and the staff was invited to hear the Visiting Committee's reading of the report. As the chair of the committee read the report of recommendations and commendations in a most serious voice, I was greatly impressed by the efficiency and accuracy with which the committee summarized the strengths and weaknesses of the school. I was inspired by that experience to respond positively a few years later when I was asked to serve on a committee.

Subsequently, I served on about 20 committees before becoming the Executive Director. I was constantly impressed with the amount of information the committees could collect, analyze, and report on in the short marathon visits. Much of my professional development can be attributed to my participation on these committees. During each visit, I learned something that could be used back in my district, and I was able to network with some of the most talented, committed people in our profession.

Some of the events that occurred during my time at WASC include the development of the *Focus on Learning* protocol, the integration of the WASC/CDE review process, the engagement of charter schools in the WASC process, moving to the offices on Airport Boulevard, the addition of a commission member from the private sector, and the purchase of an office building in Temecula to establish a branch office in Southern California.

During my time as Executive Director, I became increasingly impressed with the founders of WASC. These were men of great insight who established a wonderful plan for accrediting schools and assisting schools to improve themselves through self-analysis. In the book, *History of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges 1962–87*, Dr. Siverson, with the help of others, relates the early history of the association. Reading this work, one cannot help admiring their early efforts and dedication.

During my days at WASC, I was regularly impressed with the professionalism and competence of the Commissioners with whom I had the privilege of serving. These hard working folks regularly and cheerfully read a myriad of school reports and consistently rendered decisions and recommendations that were sound and productive. They were a harmonious group, tightly focused on the mission of WASC.

There is something magical about the nature of the WASC and its commissioners that results in great benefit to the schools it serves and to society. I am proud that I had the opportunity to be an integral part of this endeavor for ten years.

WASC has prevailed through good and difficult times for education in its 50-year history. I hope and believe it will endure as a positive force for high-quality education for another half century.

Donald Haught
ACS WASC Executive Director
1993–2003



Donald Haught
Executive Director
1993–2002



David Brown
Executive Director
2003–present

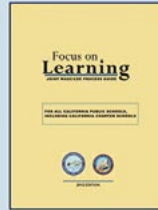


Marilyn George
Associate Executive Director
1987–present



Lee Duncan
Associate Executive Director
2010–present

WASC in Photographs



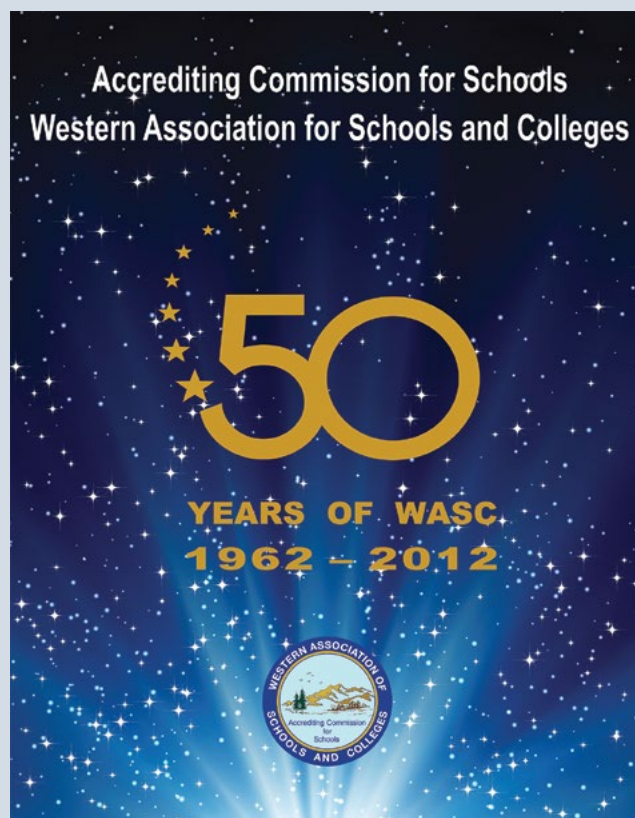
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WASC Golden Jubilee

June 30, 2012

Burlingame, CA



ACS WASC COMMISSIONERS

(listed by the organizations they represent)

Officers

Harlan Lyso, Chairperson
Valene Staley, Assistant Chairperson

Association of California School Administrators

Grant Bennett
Richard Bray
Rebecca Buettner
Martin Griffin
Mary Luebben
Michael McCoy
Valene Staley

Association of Christian Schools International

William Walner

California Association of Independent Schools

Damon Kerby

California Association of Private School Organizations

Kathy Ralston

California Congress of Parents and Teachers, Inc. (PTA)

Rosaline Turnbull

California Department of Education

William Ellerbee

California Federation of Teachers

George Martinez

California School Boards Association

Jesus Holguin

California Teachers Association

Lorraine Richards

Charter Schools

Chase Davenport

East Asia Regional Council of Schools

Harlan Lyso

Hawaii Association of Independent Schools

Rodney Chamberlain

Hawaii Government Employees' Association

Ann Mahi

Hawaii State Department of Education

Jill Zodrow

Hawaii State Teachers Association

Doris Yamashiro-Tanaka

Pacific Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

Berit von Pohle

Postsecondary Education

John Kerr

Public Members

Shabaka Heru
Carl Takamura

Western Catholic Educational Association

Thomas Butler
Chad Colden
Nina Russo
Sally Todd

Commission Update

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

2013 Commission Meetings

Winter

January 28–29, 2013
Honolulu, HI

Spring

April 29–30, 2013
Burlingame, CA

Summer

June 24–25, 2013
Burlingame, CA

ACS WASC Golden Jubilee Commission

The Summer ACS WASC Commission meeting celebrated the 50-year anniversary of WASC at their dinner. In addition to the Commissioners and their spouses and WASC staff, previous Executive Director Donald Haught attended and gave a celebratory speech.



2012 ACS WASC Commission

International Update

Harlan E. Lyso, Ph.D. | Chairperson, Accrediting Commission for Schools, WASC

Even as the number of WASC accredited schools grows in California and Hawaii, interest in WASC accreditation internationally has also increased dramatically. Especially in Asia, an area in which WASC has supported the school improvement efforts of international schools since the 1960s, international schools are being established at a record pace. WASC's *Focus on Learning* process provides international schools a meaningful, structured, and recognized method to address continuous school improvement. Concurrently, the status of an international school as a WASC accredited school provides prospective parents with the assurance that the school offers a credible and internationally recognized educational program for its students.

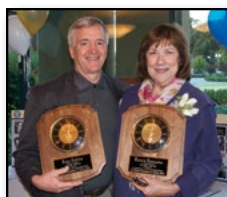
Recently, the East Asia Regional Council of School (EARCOS), an organization that provides support to 116 international schools located throughout Asia, incorporated within its requirements the expectation that member schools evidence "international mindedness." International mindedness has always been an element of the *Focus on Learning* process, as part of the emphasis on 21st century skills. As evidence of WASC's commitment to supporting its schools, this past summer the international version of *Focus on Learning* has been revised to incorporate language that speaks more directly to international mindedness.

Recognition of the value schools would gain from undertaking a WASC *Focus on Learning* process, several national educational departments have contacted WASC seeking either training in the development of an accreditation process for their national schools or collaboration with WASC in the accreditation of international schools within their respective countries. In addition, WASC has been involved with national governments in their work on global education. WASC has established relationships with the national educational offices of Thailand and China and is developing relationships with other countries as well. Recently, WASC conducted accreditation training workshops in Qatar at the request of the Qatar Supreme Education Council. Clearly, recognition of the quality inherent in the *Focus on Learning* process is being recognized far beyond California and Hawaii.

ACS WASC Commission Members

Members who left the Commission this June include: John Collins, Patricia Livingston, and Steve Malvini. 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: Thomas Butler, Nina Russo, Sally Todd, and Jill Zodrow.



Awards given at the ACS WASC Summer 2012 Commission Meeting
L-R: John Collins and Patricia Livingston

ACS WASC Membership, 2011-2012

The school membership of the Accrediting Commission for Schools continued to grow during the 2011–12 school year. Currently, approximately 150 new applicant schools are preparing for their initial accreditation visit with WASC.

EVALUATION AREA	# OF SCHOOLS 2009–10	# OF SCHOOLS 2010–11	# OF SCHOOLS 2011–12
California	3,630	3,686	3,753
Hawaii	189	194	206
Out of State	9	14	27
Pacific Islands			
American Samoa	10	10	10
Federated States of Micronesia	2	2	2
Guam	34	34	35
Northern Marianas	23	22	2
Marshall Islands	3	3	3
Palau	1	1	1
Africa	1	1	1
Asia	202	207	218
Australia	1	1	1
Mexico	1	1	1
TOTAL	4,106	4,176	4,260

Office Update

Burlingame Office



L-R: Lisa Blaylock, Cynthia Newton, Joanne Cacicedo, Lino Gantan, Susan Lange, Michelle Nunes, Sheléne Peterson, Alice Hauser, Mitchell Peck, Frances Rivette, Cris Lunny, Albert Chan, Judy Abbott

Temecula Office



L-R: Emily Barton, Denise Jagoda, Ginger Hovenic, Lee Duncan, Alicia Adatao, Michelle Allen, Tiffany Waite

New WASC Staff

Mitchell Peck joined the Burlingame WASC office in April as a welcome addition to the Reception Desk. He was raised in Riverside County and recently moved to the San Francisco Bay Area. He previously worked as a paraprofessional in the Reach Autism Program with the Riverside County Office of Education. He is an outdoor enthusiast, and can frequently be found hiking around the Bay Area on weekends.



Albert Chan joined WASC in mid-July of 2012 and is the new accountant in the Business Department in the Burlingame office. He grew up in San Francisco, CA. He is a certified public accountant with 15 years of accounting experience. He likes baseball (a San Francisco Giants fan), video games, and following the stock market.



In Memoriam — Jess Whipple

Jess Whipple, ACS WASC Chief Financial Officer, passed away on May 13, 2012. Jess had been with WASC since 1992 and those who knew him were captivated by his positive attitude and unwavering willingness to help. Jess leaves behind his wife, Kathleen, and two children, Michelle and Michael. WASC has created an educational support fund for Michelle and Michael, which we hope can offset the challenges of continuing education for his children. Those wishing to contribute to the scholarship fund should send contributions to Lisa Blaylock at ACS WASC, 533 Airport Blvd, Suite 200, Burlingame, CA 94010. Contributions should be made in care of the Jess Whipple Scholarship Fund.

Online Education — the Future or Now?

Ginger Hovenic, Ed.D. | Director of School and Member Relations, Southern California, Accrediting Commission for Schools, WASC



Who would have thought 50 years ago that students could sit at a computer, get instruction from a quality teacher in perhaps a different state, and receive a high school diploma? Online learning is sweeping the nation and becoming increasingly common, both in K-12 and higher education classrooms. Around the world, learners of all ages

take advantage of online education for ease of use and to access otherwise unavailable classes. Online education and schools can now provide learning and studying options that address the variety of ways students wish to learn today.

In 2010, the International Association for K-12 Online Learning (iNACOL) reported that 40 states had state virtual schools or state-led initiatives for online education and that 30 states, as well as Washington, D.C., had statewide full-time online schools. They also estimated that in 2009–2011, there were more than 2 million students accessing their education online.

These figures represent phenomenal growth because just ten years ago it is estimated there were 40,000–50,000 students enrolled in K-12 online education. Most of this growth is occurring in blended-learning environments where students learn online at least part of the time in an adult-supervised environment.

The main reason why school districts make online learning opportunities available to their students is to provide courses not otherwise available at their schools. Many students are separated from resources geographically or through time conflicts. The College Board estimated that in 2010 only 33.7% of school districts offered AP or IB courses in English, math, social studies, and science, so districts and students looked to online coursework.

The online courses with the highest enrollments in school districts are credit recovery and dual-credit. iNACOL reported that 81% of schools state that credit recovery is important,

especially for urban schools. Online coursework with direct connections to teachers is available for students to complete their high school diploma. Presently, 74% of school districts with distance education programs have plans to expand online offerings over the next three years.

WASC has taken a proactive approach to ensure that schools meet the *Focus on Learning* quality criteria for education, as well as state and local requirements. WASC wants to ensure that the quality of education a student receives does not depend upon the type of school — whether traditional or online learning.

Last summer, WASC assembled an Online School Task Force, composed of educators of online education, that met to discuss the unique attributes of online/blended learning schools and identified ways to integrate the criteria for online schools into the *Focus on Learning* protocol. The task force reviewed course offerings, curriculum, data collection, testing situations, student to teacher ratios, and the rate of student graduation — adding their own unique experiences as online/blended learning school educators — to create appropriate indicators and prompts for incorporation into the new 2013 editions of the *Focus on Learning* manuals.

With increasing pressure for schools to move part of their course offerings online, we know it is important that WASC ensures that the focus on learning for online delivery is just as viable as face-to-face instruction. Who knows what the next 50 years will unveil, but we do know that with continued input WASC will continue to be at the forefront of ensuring quality educational standards that maintain the focus on the student and the best learning environments possible.

From Carbon Copies to Google Docs

Emily Barton | WASC School Visit Team Coordinator, Southern California, Accrediting Commission for Schools, WASC



It is hard to believe that WASC is actually turning 50 this year, which means it all began in 1962. It is even harder for me to believe that my first WASC assignment was in 1966. I was a last-minute replacement on a team going to a large high school in the Los Angeles area. Because I lived in the same county as the chair, he drove me to the school, gave me a copy of the

report, and acted as my trainer to prepare me for serving on the Visiting Committee. I was the only woman on the team, which was a huge surprise to the school since they had based accommodations on a male-only group. On the first day, we quickly learned that there was a small “war” going on between the administrators and the counselors. Both sides were looking for allies and tried to capture our attention to plead their cases whenever they could. I learned diplomacy quickly and resumed observing my assigned classrooms. Those were the days when most of the committee discussions and writing was done after dinner at the hotel which meant nice, long evening sessions.

By the second full day of the visit, it was pretty obvious that most of the team members were becoming less than energetic as we had unknowingly walked into a school that was soon to become the “poster child” for a new strain of influenza that was attacking the city. We valiantly continued with the task at hand no matter how much our heads were throbbing. Dinner that second evening consisted of aspirin and chicken soup! We managed to handwrite the first draft of the report to be ready for day three of the visit. After talking with the Leadership Team (or whatever it was called in those days) to get their response of the draft, it was time to prepare the document. Since we were given no secretarial help from the school, one of us had to type the report — guess who was chosen? Not only was I the only woman on the team, I was the only English teacher as well. I had been helping the others with “wordsmithing” anyway, but now I was fully ensconced in front of a typewriter,

and not the electric kind. I really didn’t mind and was glad to help; however, I was NOT very excited about the six carbons that had to go along with the task. For those of you who have never seen carbon paper, it is definitely not user friendly, especially when it comes to correcting mistakes.

By this time four members had to go home early because they were too ill to continue. The four of us who remained managed to get through the final meeting which, of course, included reading the entire document aloud to the staff with the counselors on one side of the room still glaring at the administrators on the other side. When we were finally able to escape to our cars, the only challenge left was the L.A. freeways. The chair dropped me off at my house where my flu-ridden bones made it from the car to the living room couch sporting a temperature of 103. I looked at my husband and emphatically announced that “I will NEVER do this again!”

I did keep my vow to abstain from WASC visits for a few years, but as I began to see the process through the eyes of a school, I changed my mind about wanting to be involved. So, here it is 46 years later, and I am still doing WASC visits and I’m even working for WASC assigning members to go on visits. On one visit I completed this spring, the committee had options of using Google Docs, PowerPoint, flash drives, etc. — a far cry from erasing mistakes on six pages of carbon paper.

There are, however, some things about WASC that just don’t change. A group of educators who probably have never seen each other before get together for three and a half days to stay focused on helping one school examine all the good things it is doing and pointing out some possibilities for improvement. No matter what challenges occur during the visit, at the end of the visit the committee swears they’re the best team ever, and they want to do it again! It’s amazing what people can do with a common purpose and a common heart for helping students.

For me, I am very grateful that I did not keep my vow to stay as far away from WASC as possible. I am very much content and professionally satisfied to be part of this time-honored process.

WASC Words 2012

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