

VISITING COMMITTEE MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES

Responsibilities Prior to the Visit

1. Provide to the committee Chair your preferred areas of coverage during the visit.
2. Attend team member training session if untrained (dates and locations on the CAIS website).
3. Read the school's self-study, which you should receive by December 1, relating it to the CAIS/WASC standards and criteria in the accreditation manual.
4. Determine the extent to which the school has followed the parameters of the self-study:
 - a. The involvement of the school community in a collaborative way.
 - b. The clarification of the school's purpose and goals for students.
 - c. The assessment of all aspects of the school's operations, the student program and its impact on student personal and academic growth with respect to the criteria and standards
 - d. The development of an Action Plan, as well as an accountability system for monitoring the plan's implementation.
5. Complete pre-visit preparation
 - a. Review the standards/criteria with respect to the analysis of the self-study report; study other pertinent materials.
 - b. Compare the school's self-findings to the concepts of the standards/criteria. Critique Action Plan.
 - c. Write questions regarding issues, concerns, clarifications and evidence that should be pursued during the visit.
 - d. Develop tentative narrative statements for assigned sections of the Visiting Committee report. Send these to the Visiting Committee Chair prior to the visit.
6. Confirm the meeting time and location and schedule for the visit.
7. Bring the following materials to visit:
 - a. Accreditation manual
 - b. Self-Study Report
 - c. All notes
 - d. Credit card or cash to cover reimbursable expenses
8. Arrive on time and do not schedule other commitments during the visit.

Responsibilities During the Visit

To what degree is the school meeting the CAIS/WASC standards/criteria? Time is limited so don't overemphasize particular concerns. The goal is to clarify information already in the school report and secure information not yet provided.

1. Gathering Information

(See Tips: Gathering, Reviewing, and Analyzing Data/Information in Section Four in Procedures for Appraising the Independent School.)

- a. Demonstrate a genuine interest in the school's welfare and a desire to be helpful. Establish rapport with staff.
- b. Assure teachers that classroom visits are not evaluative but are planned to observe the general instructional atmosphere and climate of the school.
- c. Frame open-ended questions to elicit information without reflecting a value judgment.
- d. Help all concerned to recognize the needs of the school and develop a desire for school improvement.
- e. Don't allow pressure groups or individuals to distract you from the main task and schedule.
- f. Allow adequate time and give appropriate feedback to responses to questions.
- g. Concentrate on being a good listener. Be aware of nonverbal feedback.
- h. Provide regular feedback to the Steering Committee and other staff members regarding findings as a result of the visit, not the self-study alone.

2. Utilize the CAIS/WASC standards/criteria as a comparison base throughout entire visit.

- a. Let the program unfold; don't prejudge. Validate, verify, and document. Be aware of personal biases that can influence observation.
- b. Look at the quality of program experienced by students and evidence of successful student learning.
- c. Look for evidence of a process for school improvement.
- d. Structure the gathering of evidence (class/program observations, interviews, examination of student work and other information) for the final Visiting Committee report.
- e. Meet with the Steering Committee to present and thoroughly discuss the draft Visiting Committee report.

3. Working with the Visiting Committee/Preparing the Report

- a. Work cooperatively with Visiting Committee members to discuss findings and make decisions.
- b. Write recommendations and commendations that reflect the standards and criteria that will serve as guidelines for school improvement.
- c. Make necessary modifications to the Visiting Committee report and come to closure on it.

4. Preparing the Documentation and Justification Statement

- a. Assist the Chair in preparing the confidential Documentation/Justification Statement for the CAIS Board of Standards and WASC Commission, ensuring that correlation is evident between the recommended term and the Visiting Committee report.
- b. Participate in the Visiting Committee discussion of the Recommendation for a Term of Accreditation.
- c. Participate in the presentation of all the recommendations and commendations to the staff at the close of the visit. **Do not imply the recommended term of accreditation** or respond to questions.
- d. Complete the expense voucher and submit to team Chair for submission to the school.