

STANDARDS FOR ACCREDITING SCHOOLS

I. Eligibility for Membership

- A. Any private school is eligible to seek accreditation by TAAPS. The combination of grades offered must be contiguous and reasonable for the philosophy of the school involving pre-kindergarten and above. A minimum of three (3) grades, kindergarten and above are required to be in place before application will be considered.
- B. The entire school, consisting of all grades currently offered, must be evaluated for accreditation initially and the school must have been operating successfully for at least two (2) school years prior to the On-Site Visit.
- C. It is **NOT** the intent of TAAPS to accredit home schools, vocational or franchised schools.
- D. Variances may be considered due to the philosophy and purpose of the school.

II. Philosophy

- A. The school shall have published a statement of philosophy and objectives from which the admissions criteria and student evaluation criteria is derived.
- B. The statement of philosophy and objectives are in writing and distributed to any interested party.
- C. The advertising of the school reflects the philosophy and objectives of the total program of the school.
- D. The admissions criteria and admissions procedures are based on the philosophy and objectives as published.
- E. The curriculum of the school had been developed using the philosophy and objectives as a guide.
- F. The evaluation of student progress is predicted by the philosophy and objectives.

III. Goals and Objectives

- A. It shall be written and approved by the faculty, Board of Directors, and the Administration of the school.
- B. It shall be in accordance with the philosophy of the school.
- C. The faculty shall indicate how the goals of the school are implemented in their teaching.
- D. It shall include students':
 - 1. Intellectual development
 - 2. Social and emotional development
 - 3. Cultural development
 - 4. Ethical development
 - 5. Physical development (to include health and safety)
 - 6. Career development
 - 7. Civic development

IV. Organization and Governance

- A. The governing body of a school shall have adopted and published statements maintaining high quality in academic, physical and ethical educational programs.
- B. The school shall be an incorporated educational institution or an integral part of a sponsoring organization.
- C. If the school is a separate corporation, its governing board is elected according to the school's constitution and the actions of the governing board are legally binding on the school.
- D. If the school is an integral part of the legal entity of the organization, rather than a separate corporation, its governing committee is an official committee of the organization, elected according to that organization's policy.
- E. The relationship between the organization and school is harmonious.
 - 1. The organization may support the school financially, or the organization may receive funds from the school for joint use of facilities and services provided.
 - 2. In dual use of facilities, the school staff and volunteer or professional staff of organization are cooperative.
- F. The names of the members of the governing body of record

the positions they hold, which includes any fiscal interest, are available to any interested part.

G. The governing body has formulated, codified and has in writing a set of policies that establish the rules for the operation of the school.

H. The school's written policies address:

- * the school calendar
- * student admission
- * school day
- * student rights regarding curriculum, discipline and dismissal
- * tuition payment
 - * teacher rights regarding discipline evaluation, contract renewal and dismissal and forfeiture of relationships to other organizations and institutions.

I. The policies clearly reflect that the school is controlled by contract law and includes appropriate policy statements in contracts for attendance of students and employment of staff.

J. The policies of the governing board describe the relationship between the board and the head administrator.

K. A school failing to abide by the school's adopted policies will place its accredited status in jeopardy.

L. Schools are mandated to carry adequate liability insurance, workmans' compensation, vehicle and property insurance.

V. Administration

A. The school shall be guided through its practices and programs by enough administrative and service personnel to assure adequate management and operation.

B. The head administrator of the school shall be authorized under policies adopted by the governing body to manage and operate all programs of the school including, but not limited to financial, academic, moral, physical, extracurricular activities, discipline, admissions, facilities, and personnel.

C. If there is no established policy in any emergency situation, the administrator is authorized to act according to his best judgment, but should report this action to the body at the first opportunity.

- D. All school administrators have appropriate degree; and/or experience that qualified them to do their assigned jobs assigned jobs afflictively.
1. The principal shall have a master's degree or a bachelor's degree with appropriate preparation for the position.
 2. Other personnel, such as counselors, business managers, and records clerks, must have degrees or training or experience appropriate to the assignments.
 3. There is a full-time librarian for a school whose total enrollment in grades 1 - 12 is 500 or more, a part-time librarian for schools containing between 250 and 500 students. For small schools library services may be available in the community. The ratio of in-school library books shall be *15 catalogued books per student. Recorded evidence of library usage must be maintained. (Amended 1996) (*Amended-2001)
 4. There is adequate support service to efficiently manage the business affairs of the school.
 5. There is adequate support service to provide for the efficient maintenance of permanent records.
 6. The school provides evidence that it meets all mandatory provisions for health records and assures the health and safety of its students.

VI. Faculty

- A. The faculty and staff of the school shall support the philosophy and objectives of the instructional program. These individuals are prepared to fulfill their assignments as determined by preparation and evaluation against performance.
- B. The governing body has adopted a job description for each position on the staff which includes the preparation required of the individuals who may be employed in that position.
- C. All teachers are qualified with appropriate degrees and/or preparation in the following assignments unless alternate job experience is on file.

- D. The Baccalaureate degree with the appropriate preparation in the area of the assignment.
- E. Elementary education courses, such as reading, language arts, and music may be counted toward hours required for elementary teachers. PK and Kindergarten may be included in elementary education preparation.
- F. Preschool and kindergarten teachers may be qualified if they have the Baccalaureate degree and/or appropriate early childhood training. Seminary or Montessori trained teachers may be qualified to teach preschool.
- G. The full-time librarian has at least 24 semester hours in library science and the part-time librarian has at least 18 semester hours in library science.
- H. In times of emergency, the minimum preparation permitted for a position may be temporarily waived with the full knowledge of the parents of those students under the direction of the faculty member. The nature of the emergency situation must be clearly stated and a plan developed to remedy the situation as expeditiously as possible. (Amended 2000)
- I. All teachers shall give evidence of having a commitment consistent with the philosophy of the school.
- J. The school conducts an annual performance appraisal for individual members of the faculty.
- K. Professional staff members are employed by contract and are required to have sixteen documented training clock hours per year.
- L. The Staff should not have excessive absences nor have an excessive pattern of parental complaints.
- M. The school should strive to assure a continuity of faculty without an excessive and consistent turn over of staff.
- N. Records for faculty members are kept permanently.
- O. Qualified applicants are employed without regard to race, creed, ethnic background, or national origin.
- P. School may not house more than two grades per teacher. Another teacher or aide must be assigned for three grades.

VII. Facilities

The school plant, facilities, equipment, and materials shall be free from health and safety hazards and be conducive to carrying out the philosophy and objectives of the school.

- A. The school has inspection records to demonstrate that all applicable health, fire and safety standards are being met.
- B. All statutory building codes are met or exceeded.
- C. There are adequate classrooms available for the total number of pupils and each room is large enough to accommodate the number of students assigned. (20 square feet per child)
- D. There is adequate and appropriate office space for the school.
- E. Restrooms are adequate and appropriate for the ages of the children enrolled in the school. (1 per 20 students)
- F. There is a library available to the school with at least 15 catalogued volumes per children enrolled in any grades 1 - 12 appropriate for school use. (Amended - 2001)
- G. Playground space, athletic fields, and gymnasium facilities are provided as specified by the philosophy and objectives of the school.
- H. There is adequate teacher work space and equipment necessary to communicate with parents, to serve instructional needs, and to keep records.
 - 1. There is space adequate to secure pupil's permanent records, and accurate pupil data is maintained permanently.
 - 2. Water fountains, dressing and shower rooms, and storage spaces are adequate.
 - 3. All spaces occupied by students or staff are adequately cooled, heated and lighted.
 - 4. Adequate safety precautions are observed. Particular care is exercised in peak traffic periods before and after school.

VIII. Finances

The financial program of the school shall assure the continuity of the program.

- A. Income from tuition, fees, gifts, endowments, and fund raising activities must be adequate to support a high quality educational program.
- B. Salaries are at sufficient levels to attract and hold competent teachers, administrators, and staff members.
- C. There are adequate supplies, textbooks, furniture, and pieces of equipment available for the operation of a good educational program.
- D. An adequate annual budget is proposed by the administration and adopted by the governing body.
- E. An annual audit of certified financial statements is prepared for non-profit schools.
- F. No abrupt terminations of grade offerings should occur. One consideration for the educational welfare of students will cause a re-organization to phase out its school (if so desired) in a manner that is in the best interest of the students currently enrolled.
- G. Funds are available for staff development, including travel expense funds for administrators and teachers.
- H. There are enough support staff employees to serve the school's operation adequately, and enough teachers that classes do not become unreasonably large.

IX. Students

Students represent the embodiment of the school's philosophy and objectives and are admitted and served with the following standards clearly in evidence.

- A. The School admits qualified students without regard to race, color, ethnic background or national origin.
- B. Students are screened and admitted only when the school's program can be predicted to serve the needs of each.
- C. Students are evaluated continuously and are provided annual progress reports designating promotion or retention.

- D. Enrolled students records, as identification, health, and major testing, transcripts, etc. shall be kept on file in a secure and confidential place for a minimum of five years. The files of high school graduates shall be kept permanently.
- E. The school publishes a document that describes the curriculum, its organization, how students are classified, the marking system, disciplinary rules and techniques, promotion and retention policies and graduation requirements.
- F. The school shall have a mandatory attendance rule for students. enforcement may be flexible but shall assure academic achievement of the students.

X. Academic Program

- A. The school's curriculum encompasses Texas Education Agency's TAKS.
- B. The school year shall be a minimum of 175 days of offered instruction.
- C. The school shall provide a minimum of six hours of instruction per day.
- D. Teacher planning and preparation time should be designed to fit the needs of the school and class size.
- E. Curricular and extracurricular activities are designed and balanced to provide for all student's academic, physical, social and moral development.
- F. The school policies provide for transferring students to be placed according to their records and ability to perform.

- G. The school promotes good citizenship.

XI. Communication and Self-Monitoring

- A. The school, as a component of accountability, shall practice through self-enforcement the reporting of infractions of TAAPS principles and standards to TAAPS.
- B. The school has a system of communications with the governing

board and parents of the school to keep them informed of all acts of variance with policies, principles, and standards.

- C. The school has a system of communication with parents and teachers to inform them of any expected changes in the contracts for enrollment, tuition, or employment.