Commission on Membership and Accreditation

<u>Manual for School Accreditation</u>

Connecticut Association of Independent Schools
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About CAIS

The Connecticut Association of Independent Schools (CAIS) is a member in good standing of the International Council Advancing Independent School Accreditation (ICAISA), formerly the Commission on Accreditation of the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS).

In addition, CAIS is recognized by the Connecticut State Board of Education as an official accrediting agency. Accreditation by CAIS is coterminous with Connecticut State accreditation.

The CAIS accreditation process has been thoroughly reviewed by ICAISA, a nonprofit association with 19 member accrediting agencies, representing schools in the United States and throughout the world. The primary purpose of the Council is to provide quality assurance and accountability for the accreditation programs of its state, regional, and international independent school member associations.

Although ICAISA itself does not accredit individual schools, its 19 accrediting members, including CAIS, have been accrediting schools for decades. ICAISA has set high standards for accreditation to which it holds each member association accountable.

Criteria for effective practice with which all members must comply were agreed upon, model standards were developed to serve as a point of reference, and a system of peer review was established to assure quality and support improvement. CAIS received certification from the NAIS Commission on Accreditation in 2017.

It is the mission of CAIS to serve both independent education and the children and families of Connecticut by:

• working to foster independence and freedom of choice in education
• giving leadership and support to member schools in their pursuit of excellence, access, diversity and accountability
• fostering collaboration among member schools, and cooperation with other educational organizations and the public sphere
• providing appropriate services in keeping with models of practice for each aspect of school life.

The Manual for School Accreditation has been developed by The Connecticut Association of Independent Schools with the cooperation and contributions of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges and the International Council Advancing Independent School Accreditation.

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What is Accreditation?

Independent school accreditation is a peer-review process that fosters excellence in education and encourages school improvement through discovery, dialogue, compliance, and commitment. Accreditation enables a member school to develop clearly defined goals and objectives based on its mission and philosophy.

Accreditation is both a process and a status. It is the process of reviewing schools and their programs to assess their educational quality – how well they serve students and society. The result of the successfully completed process is the designation of "accredited" status.

Schools use common practices, including a Self Study to demonstrate compliance with the standards, an on-site visit by an evaluation group of peer experts, and a subsequent review and decision by the accrediting body about accredited status. This review is repeated every ten years if the institution or program is to sustain its accreditation.

An established accrediting organization, such as CAIS, is subject to external review, a process called "recognition." This involves periodic examination of the organization by the International Council Advancing Independent School Accreditation (ICAISA), based on a set of standards.

The Value of Accreditation

The accreditation process is designed to assist a school in engaging the energies of all community members in reviewing and clarifying the School's purpose and goals for students, and in developing plans to accomplish these goals. The School also develops measurements that show the degree to which its goals for students are achieved. Because each school community is unique, the accreditation process permits the School to use considerable flexibility in its approach to the Self Study, yet still be linked to sound components of a quality self-assessment.

Through the completion of the accreditation process, schools will have:

● Involved the School community in a collaborative way;

● Clarified the School's purpose and its goals for its students - and the programs, people, and facilities that support them;

● Assessed 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;

● Received a cogent, forthright, and detailed written report from a team of trained and experienced peer educators and administrators that will serve as future planning guidance, as well as an accountability system for monitoring the School's improvement plans;

● Assured that students and the public can expect that a school or program lives up to its promises and confidence may be held in the worth of a school and its programs;

● Provided students validation of expectations of quality for transferring credits, application to colleges and universities, and possible eligibility for financial aid;

● Confirmed that the public presentation of an educational program, student services and graduate accomplishments is fair and accurate; and additionally

● Assured that the Connecticut Association of Independent Schools has reviewed the quality of education provided and has found it to be not merely satisfactory, but exemplary, based upon the association's standards for excellence and appropriate peer expertise.

Introduction

The Manual for School Accreditation is designed to give specific attention to each of the dual purposes of accreditation: quality assurance and school improvement.

The Commission on Membership and Accreditation (CMA) has established sixteen standards of quality assurance that all schools must meet. Initial accreditation of schools will be tabled until compliance is documented; member schools may be given one year to bring themselves into compliance with any standard that is not met at the time of the visit.

Part I of the Self Study asks the School to demonstrate its compliance with regard to each standard and rate its level of compliance.

Part II of the Self Study: Reflection, Recommendations, and Issues for Future Discussion asks the School to reflect on the findings of Part I, make recommendations for itself that are action-oriented, and identify issues for further discussion that will extend important conversations generated by the Self Study.

IMPORTANT NOTE: *CAIS now uses the Google platform to assist with the accreditation process. The school will be provided with all of the essential materials (Self-Study Manual and Template, etc.)in a Google folder. Similarly, CAIS will share with the Visiting Team the template for the report and other necessary documents. All written documents and communication will be shared electronically.*

The Standards for Accreditation and Indicators

Standard 1 (Mission): There is congruence between the School's stated mission and core values and its actual program, policies, planning, and decision-making at both the operational and governance levels.

<u>**Sample Indicators:**</u>

1.a   The School has a clear statement of educational mission. The stated mission and philosophy guide the School's admissions, programming, planning, and decision-making.

1.b   The mission of the School is congruent with principles of academic scholarship, permitting and encouraging freedom of inquiry, diversity of viewpoints, and independent and critical thinking.

1.c   The mission of the School is embraced by all constituencies.

1.d   The mission statement is reviewed regularly, using a process that involves representatives of major constituencies of the School, as appropriate.

1.e   The School community is engaged in reflecting on ways to enrich the application of the mission in all aspects of the program.

1.f   The School's climate and culture support an effective educational program, consistent with its stated mission.

1.g   Requirements and expectations of students, parents, faculty, trustees, and employees clearly reflect the values and mission of the School.

1.h   The culture of the School reflects a commitment to implementing the mission of the School.

Standard 2 (Governance): The School has an appropriate system of governance that assures that the School remains true to its mission and that it has the necessary resources to support its present and prospective operations.

Sample Indicators:

2.a   The governance of the School is clearly defined, understood by all constituents, and provides for:
- continuity of mission
- stability and ethical process in transitions of leadership
- a comprehensive, multi-year planning process
- assurance of adequate financial resources
- institutional advancement/development
- evaluation of and support of the professional growth of the Head of School
- a model of inclusive decision-making for the School community
- establishing and monitoring needed school policies
- clearly defined and regularly applied procedures to orient, educate, and evaluate the governing body
- risk management and school safety
- policies related to environmental sustainability

2.b   Provision is made for participation of all constituencies in the policy-making process, as appropriate.

2.c   The governing body demonstrates and clearly communicates its commitment to the mission, and consistently exercises its fiduciary responsibilities.

2.d   The governing body provides opportunities for generative thinking on a regular basis.

2.e   The School has a current Multi-Year Plan that integrates all school operations, programs. and finances, as well as timelines for implementation.

2.f   There is an understood delegation of decision-making that gives the Head of School   the capacity to exercise effective educational leadership.

2.g   The governing body, in conjunction with the School's administration, provides for stability and continuity in the event of short and long-term periods when classes are unable to be held on campus and there is a necessity for distance (virtual and/or hybrid) learning experiences.

Standard 3 (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice): The School has created and continues to foster a program, culture and inclusive community of students, families, trustees, teachers and staff who embrace the multitude of perspectives, cultures, backgrounds and identities in our world.

Sample Indicators:

3.a   Issues of equity, diversity, inclusion, and justice are defined and incorporated into the School's program, policies, planning, and decision-making at both the operational and governance levels.

3.b   The School articulates the value of diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice to its community.

3.c   The School attends to the quality of life of all members of the community and takes actions to create an equitable, inclusive, safe, and just environment.

3.d   The governance of the School is clearly defined, understood by all constituents, and provides for: a model of inclusive behavior and integrity for the School community

3.e   The governing board establishes policies that reflect diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice and ensures that these qualities are reflected in decision-making and governing body membership.
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3.f   The School has defined what constitutes a diverse student body.

3.g   The School, in harmony with its mission and resources, seeks, admits, and supports a diverse student body and creates educational and co-curricular programs that provide equal access for all students regardless of social identity,   national origin, and/or citizenship status.

3.h   The program offers a variety of cultural experiences to reflect (a) the diversity of students enrolled and (b) the multicultural nature of the region, country, and world.

3.i   The School's teaching practices, curriculum, and broader educational program reflect a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion and social justice.

3.j   The School is mindful of the ways in which families of different identities, backgrounds and socio-economic statuses may be affected by School policies and programs.

3.k   There is an evaluation process in place to see how the School's programs need to change to reflect the diversity of the School community and the world.

3.l   The School recognizes and validates differences within the student body such as gender and gender identity, learning style or ability, race, age, ethnicity, family background, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, and religious practice.

3.m   Time is made available on a regular and consistent basis for teachers to learn ways in which their cultural backgrounds and life experience help or hinder their ability to plan together to work with students, parents, and other adults in the community.

3.n   There is a process in place to see how the School's programs need to change to identify students who will need additional support to function effectively in a pluralistic environment.

3.o   The School promotes and has ways to ensure an equitable, just, and inclusive community where students respect and value diversity and are active and responsible.

3.p   Faculty and staff, School leadership, and members of the Board of Trustees are regularly trained in the current topics, language, and academic content related to racism, discrimination, and other issues of diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice.

3.q   The School has defined what constitutes a diverse staff in accordance with the School's mission.

3.r   The School has processes in place to recruit, hire, and support a diverse staff.

3.s   The School develops and publishes a policy and plan on diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice, derived from its mission and core values that it uses to evaluate the status of the School in this regard and to guide planning to achieve goals.

3.t   The School structures ways to work with parents/guardians proactively. The School is mindful of the ways in which families of different backgrounds and socio-economic status may be affected by School policies and programs.

3.u   In marketing materials and other outward facing communications, the School demonstrates its commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice.

Standard 4 (Program): The School provides a comprehensive program of intellectual, aesthetic, and physical activities that stems from the School's beliefs about teaching and learning, is appropriate to support its mission and core values, and effectively addresses the needs of the range of students admitted. Program planning is informed by relevant research regarding how students learn and the knowledge and capacities they will need to lead purposeful and constructive lives.

<u>**Sample Indicators:**</u>

4.a   The educational program stems from the School's beliefs about teaching and learning that are regularly reviewed and that are consistent with the mission of the School.

4.b   The School programs demonstrate consideration for the appropriate intellectual, social, physical, aesthetic, emotional and ethical development of students in all aspects of school and student life.

4.c.   The curriculum demonstrates continuity from year to year.

4.d.   The School has a policy for regularly reviewing the academic program and has completed a recent, written Curriculum Plan outlining desirable and/or necessary improvements.

4.e   Attention is paid to transitions between grade levels and/or divisions of the School so as to facilitate passage of students from one level/division to another.

4.f.   The School recognizes developmental levels of children and takes them into consideration in planning programs and teaching methodologies.

4.g   The School evaluates the academic rigor, effectiveness, and integrity of online courses that its students take, and of any online courses that the School itself offers, on a regular basis.

4.h   The School strives to promote a culture of global understanding that is appropriate to the School's mission, size, and means.

4.i   The School promotes a commitment to environmental responsibility and stewardship for current and future generations that is appropriate to the School's mission.

4.j   The School's program is able to provide mission-driven opportunities to all of its students, as appropriate for distance (virtual/ hybrid) learning experiences.

Standard 5 (Early Childhood Program): The Early Childhood Program enriches the social, intellectual, and developmental needs of its students by providing appropriate programs, adequate staffing, and sufficient resources and facilities.

Sample Indicators:

5.a   The School communicates and collaborates with parents of children in its Early Childhood Program in a manner which addresses the needs of this community.

5.b   Staff who work directly with children in the Early Childhood Program are trained in the field of early childhood education/child development. Their numbers are sufficient in relation to numbers and ages of children in each early childhood grouping to perform tasks effectively and safely.

5.c   The School has curricular and extracurricular programs in place which specifically and effectively address intellectual and developmental needs of children in the Early Childhood Program and are consistent with the School's stated mission.

5.d   Facilities provided for the Early Childhood Program, including instructional, activity and play spaces, and supporting resources such as lavatories and dining areas, are adequate in construction, space provided per child, and maintenance to meet the needs of the children in the program.

5.e   Materials, routines, and procedures are so organized as to protect the health and safety of young children enrolled in the Early Childhood Program.

5.f   Those sections of the Early Childhood Program that serve children under the age of three meet state health and safety guidelines for approval of child care facilities.

5.g   Realizing the unique needs of pre-school children and their parents concerning the demands of distance (virtual and/or hybrid) learning experiences when classes are unable to be held on campus, the School develops age-appropriate plans to meet these needs.

Standard 6 (Residential Program and/or Homestay Program): The residential program and/or Homestay Program provides for an intentional curriculum, appropriate facilities, engaging activities, and adequate supervision to meet the needs of each student.

<u>Sample Indicators:</u>

Residential Programs:

6.a   The School ensures that boarding personnel receive specific training, supervision, and evaluation so as to be qualified to meet the needs of students under their care and supervision.

6.b   The residential program is consistent with the mission of the School, and is integrated into the total life of the School, especially with regard to the interaction with day students.

6.c   The School promotes environments that provide opportunities to enhance positive interaction among domestic and international students, and to develop sensitivity and understanding regarding cultural differences and needs that are specific to international students.

6.d   Evening, weekend, and vacation activities are actively planned, as part of the residential curriculum, to meet the needs of the students.

6.e   The School provides for the needs of international students, students with limited financial resources, and students who have difficulty adjusting to being away from home.

6.f   If technological services, such as computers, Internet access, email, and/or telephones, are included in residential areas, there is a process to ensure that policies and procedures are consistent with the School's overall Technology Plan and Acceptable Use Policy.

6.g   Through a well-defined process involving students, parents, and staff, a regular review of the residential program is accomplished which is intended to lead to revisions and/or improvements.

6.h   There are clearly-stated, written, and understood expectations for residential students and staff.

6.i   Students are included in planning and developing policies, expectations, and programs.

Homestay Programs:

6.j   The homestay program is consistent with the mission of the School.

6.k   The School has a formal contract with homestay families if there is a direct placement or with an agency that provides homestay placements.

6.l   The School assures that homestay facilities are safe and clean, and provide sufficient living space.

6.m   There is a clearly defined process to screen host families, including a background check and a process for matching student and family interests.

6.n   There is a procedure to include host families and students in defining and understanding the ethical and legal responsibilities of the School, host families, and students.

6.o   The School has clearly stated, written, and understood expectations for the School, host families, and students regarding the academic program and experiences both during the School week and on weekends and vacations, and these expectations and responsibilities are published and disseminated in a school handbook.

6.p   The School has a well-defined process, which includes students and host families, to regularly review the homestay program and the experience of the students for the purpose of improvement.

Standard 7 (Resources to Support the Program): Given the School's mission, there are adequate resources (space, equipment, technology, materials, and community) to support the School's program.

Sample Indicators:

7.a   Instructional facilities (including space, furnishings, and play/recreation areas) are adequate for the instructional program and are age appropriate.

7.b   There are instructional materials and equipment in sufficient quality, quantity, and variety to give effective support to the aims and methods of the program.

7.c   The School has a Library Plan which is integrated with the curriculum and which provides students with age appropriate experiences in research and reading and supports the broad purposes of the educational program.

7.d   The School has a written Academic Technology Plan, developed by teachers and academic leaders, covering the integration of technology into the various components of the program and providing for the professional development of teachers in the implementation of this plan.

7.e   The School has in place an Acceptable Use Policy of which students and families are informed and the School provides information to students and families on the appropriate and ethical use of technology.

7.f   There are procedures in place to assure that teachers have a leading role in planning the use of technology in their teaching.

7.g   Non-academic programs, if available, are consistent with the School's mission and are well organized, supplied, and staffed.

7.h   The schedule is planned by day and year to provide for the total program.

7.i   The School interacts with the community in which it is located and avails itself of community resources.

7.j   The School strives to be a positive member of the community in which it exists, is sensitive to the interests of its neighbors, and takes appropriate advantage of the character of its setting.

7.k   The financial aid resources committed to students and their families reflect the goals and mission of the School.

7.l   The School has sufficient resources to support any online courses that it offers.

7.m   The School provides the necessary technological infrastructure to accommodate its faculty, staff, and students with the ability to succeed when there is a necessity for distance (virtual/hybrid) learning experiences.

Standard 8 (Experience of the Students): The School actively considers individual students and has developed plans, policies, programs, and pedagogy to nurture, support, and encourage all students to reach their potential and to participate in the life of the School.

Sample Indicators:

8.a   Time is made available on a regular basis for teachers to plan together and to discuss students (both individuals and groups).

8.b   There is a procedure in place to assess and report on how individual students are meeting the goals of the program with regard to both personal and academic growth.

8.c   Resources are available to faculty (in-school or through outside consultants) to assist in identifying and meeting the needs of individual students.

8.d   There is a process in place to identify students who might benefit from a modification of the program.

8.e   There is a process in place to identify students for whom the School is inappropriate and a supportive process for counseling those students.

8.f   Counseling, advising, and guidance procedures and personnel address the needs of the students.

8.g   The School ensures that homestay host families receive specific training, supervision, and evaluation that address the needs of international or other guest students.

8.h   College or school placement counseling, as applicable, addresses the needs of the students.

8.i   Information is systematically gathered regarding students' experience at the School and is used to inform program planning.

8.j   The School assures that the design and delivery of online courses that its students take or the School offers meet the needs of the students and support student-to-student and student-to-teacher interactions

Standard 9 (Faculty): The School ensures that there are sufficient and trained administrators, faculty and staff members dedicated to supporting students and their families across all cultures. The School follows a comprehensive and defined program of professional development that supports continued enhancement of teachers' skills.

<u>**Sample Indicators:**</u>

9.a   The School has a procedure for recruiting professional staff who are the best available for the tasks to be performed and for the mission of the School; and also has a procedure for screening and interviewing candidates and providing them with necessary background information about the School.

9.b   Academic personnel are qualified by education, training, or experience in the areas to which they are assigned.

9.c.   Personnel practices provide ethical treatment among all faculty, administration, and staff with respect to compensation, workload, and working conditions.

9.d   The School demonstrates a commitment to staff development by providing opportunity for and expecting participation in professional growth and development.

9.e   Professional development time is used for faculty to discuss issues of teaching and learning.

9.f   The School has a shared understanding of teaching excellence.

9.g   The School has a defined program for the evaluation and supervision of teachers.

9.h   The faculty are treated with respect and the School sets clear expectations for their professional behavior.

9.i   If the School offers online courses, faculty responsible for providing these courses are appropriately qualified, trained, supported, and evaluated.

9.j   In the event of unanticipated distance (virtual and/or hybrid) learning, teachers have been prepared, in advance, to pivot from one mode of teaching to another.

9.k   Teachers are provided training to become familiar with and able to provide mission-driven, distance (virtual and hybrid) learning experiences.

Standard 10 (Administration): The administration provides leadership and maintains a structure to facilitate the effective functioning of the School, including the participation of faculty in decision-making.

<u>**Sample Indicators:**</u>

10.a The administration is effective in carrying out the program of the School and the policies established by the governing body or school board.

10.b Administrative personnel and support staff are qualified by education, training or experience to serve in the areas to which they are assigned.

10.c The administration assures review and evaluation of the educational program and provides that a current Curriculum Plan is in place.

10.d On an annual basis, the appropriate school personnel review and approve all procedural plans to be implemented in the event of short and long-term periods when classes are unable to be held on campus and there is a necessity for distance (virtual and/or hybrid) learning experiences.

10.e The School involves faculty in decision-making about the program of the School.

10.f The School demonstrates a commitment to administrator development by providing opportunity for and expecting participation in professional growth and development.

10.g The School has a defined program for the evaluation and supervision of administrators.

10.h The school ensures equal opportunity for its students and families in their ability to access and benefit from distance (virtual and/or hybrid) learning experiences.

Standard 11 (Communication): The School maintains effective systems of external and internal communication and record keeping that inform all constituents and facilitate participation.

<u>**Sample Indicators:**</u>

11.a The School publishes current school policies and procedures in handbooks or makes them readily available in other forms to the affected constituencies.

11.b There is an internal communication system to distribute minutes of meetings, give notice of decisions, and inform the School community of events and other news.

11.c The School has a mechanism in place for input from staff into decision-making regarding personnel policies, budget preparation, and other areas, as appropriate.

11.d Information regarding the financial responsibilities of the parent/guardian or student to the institution is clearly stated in writing and is made available prior to enrollment.

11.e There is a procedure for determining equitable adjustments in tuition and other financial obligations existing between the parent/guardian and the institution.

11.f Appropriate channels are available for parents to reflect their concerns and interests to school personnel.

11.g Student progress is reported regularly to parents in a clear and comprehensive manner.

11.h The School's record retention policy and practices are consistent with current federal and state statutes.

11.i. The School maintains complete and accurate records for both current and former students, faculty, and staff members that are maintained in safe storage with backup.

11.j The School ensures appropriate confidentiality of records, making them available only to authorized personnel.

11.k The School's records are protected against catastrophic loss.

11.l The School communicates effectively, in advance, to its students, parents, and faculty/staff, concerning its plans to be implemented in the case of short and long-term periods when classes are unable to be held on campus and there is a necessity for distance (virtual and/or hybrid) learning experiences.

Standard 12 (Enrollment): The admissions process assures that those students who enroll are appropriate, given the School's mission, and are likely to benefit from their experience at the School.

Sample Indicators:

12.a The School in its public relations materials presents an accurate description of its mission, organization, staff, program, and facilities.

12.b The mission of the School is reviewed with prospective families.

12.c The School is transparent in its admissions and retention policies and provides information that accurately describes tuition levels, fees, and all other expectations.

12.d The School has mission-aligned procedures in place to ensure that students can be well-served by the School programs.

12.e. The School has clearly stated procedures for the admission of students, which are developmentally appropriate at different levels.

12.f The School has developed a profile of its student body that defines the range and type of students suitable for admission.

12.g If tuition assistance is offered, there are clearly stated policies and procedures for the application for and award of grants which are consistent with the mission of the School.

12.h The School uses information concerning the performance of students and graduates in evaluating admissions procedures.

12.i The School undertakes an analysis of the reasons students depart prior to graduation and uses the results to inform admissions procedures and program revisions.

12.j Those responsible for admissions communicate with those responsible for the program of the School to assure that necessary resources are available to meet the needs of individual students who are admitted.

12.k The admissions staff communicates regularly with the teaching faculty about the specific talents/strengths/skills/needs of newly enrolled students.

Standard 13 (Evaluation and Assessment): The School engages in forms of programmatic assessment consistent with fulfilling its mission and core values. This data is used to inform decision-making and planning.

Sample Indicators:

13.a The School conducts annual program review and revision based on assessment of student performance.

13.b Procedures are in place to assess individual student progress toward meeting the goals of the program, and to communicate progress effectively and appropriately to students and families.

13.b The School uses some form of longitudinal assessment of student performance (such as portfolio assessment).

13.c The School conducts exit interviews of students and faculty and uses the data to inform admissions and program planning.

13.d The School has procedures to follow-up on the experiences of alumni/ae and uses the data to inform admissions and program planning.

13.e The School brings in consultants and/or visitors from other schools to participate in the periodic evaluation of programs.

13.f The School participates in state sponsored learning results activities, as appropriate.

13.g The School carries out programs for supervision and evaluation of all personnel that are understood by all concerned.

13.h Those responsible for leadership engage in periodic self-evaluation of their performance.

13.i If applicable, the School's plans for developing, sustaining, and expanding online courses are integrated into the overall planning and evaluation procedures of the School.

13.j The vitality/influence of the mission in the life of the School is assessed.

Standard 14 (Infrastructure): There are adequate resources (personnel, finances, facilities, equipment, and materials) to provide for the overall institutional needs of the School.

Sample Indicators:

14.a There is evidence of effective management resources sufficient to advance the mission of the School and to provide for financial sustainability.

14.b There are effective policies and procedures for the management of operating and capital funds in compliance with generally accepted principles.

14.c The School has appropriate procedures for accounting and for auditing the accounts of the School.

14.d The School has adequate financial resources for the needs of the School.

14.e The School has adequate provision for insurance coverage.

14.f The physical facilities of the School are appropriately maintained.

14.g There is a recent, written Facilities Plan covering future needs, improvements, and additions.

14.h The School has a clear picture of its long- and short-term development needs and the plans, organization, and staffing to meet those needs.

14.i The School has a written, institutional Technology Plan that provides for the coordination of academic and administrative functions, defines the technological services available, projects needs and directions, and describes the management system.

Standard 15 (Health and Safety): The School is a safe and healthy place for students and faculty.

Sample Indicators:

15.a The School's climate, policies and procedures, rooted in inclusivity and empathy, honor the dignity of every person in their community.

15.b The School is a safe, clean, well-organized place that nurtures learning and mutual understanding among students and faculty. Concerns for safety include physical and emotional well-being.

15.c Students affirm they are supported in the development of relationships (student-to -student and student-to-teacher) based in trust and mutual respect.

15.d The School has a comprehensive written Crisis Response Plan that is clearly 15understood by faculty, staff, students, and parents.

15.e The physical facilities and staffing for healthcare are adequate to meet the needs of the student body, whether residential or day.

15.f Facilities and staff for food services are adequate and the quality of the food meets reasonable nutritional requirements.

15.g The School has necessary support services and programs to meet the emotional needs of students.

15.h The School continually audits and validates the systems, facilities and practices that ensure the safety of the School community.

15.i There is a person or team with responsibility for reviewing safety provisions for any on-campus or off-campus activities, including field trips, athletic events, wilderness expeditions, etc.

15.j The School requires appropriate adult-student supervision during school hours and all school-sponsored student activities and programs

15.k The School has a reporting procedure in place to record and follow-up on any incidents regarding the health and safety of students or staff.

15.l The School thoroughly and regularly educates and trains all personnel in the legal requirements of mandatory reporting, appropriate emotional and physical boundaries and healthy relationships.

15.m There is a procedure in place to identify, monitor, and ensure compliance with applicable local, state, and federal regulations.

Standard 16 (The Accreditation Process): The School is fully committed to institutional improvement and to the process of accreditation. The School completed an inclusive Self Study, conducted in a spirit of full disclosure and following Association guidelines; responds to Commission recommendations and the requirement to meet all Standards; and participates fully in the peer review process, hosting a Visiting Team and sending personnel to serve on Visiting Teams to other institutions.

<u>**Sample Indicators:**</u>

16.a The School has completed a thorough Self Study (Part I and II) in accordance with CAIS policies.

16.b Administration, professional staff and those with governance responsibilities have actively participated in and are familiar with the Self Study and its findings.

16.c The School has in place a procedure for follow-up on plans and strategies found in its own Self Study and on recommendations in the Visiting Team report and to integrate improvement plans resulting from the Self Study into the School's Multi-Year Plan.

16.d The School participates in the Association's peer based accreditation process and is represented on Visiting Teams to other schools.

Guide for the Self Study

The Self Study is an exercise in analysis and planning. It presupposes work done in advance that provides background information. The Self Study should be inclusive of all faculty members and should engage others as the School deems appropriate. The Self Study Report consists of two parts: (1) review and documentation of compliance with the CAIS Standards and (2) reflection, formulation of recommendations, and identifying issues for further discussion in response to the findings of the Self Study teams.

Preparation for the Self Study

Prior to beginning the Self Study the School must gather background information that will inform the work of the teams, as follows:

1. The Mission. The School should review the existing mission statement through an inclusive process and revise as needed.

2. The Curriculum. The School must have in place a description of the curriculum in a format appropriate to the School. At the minimum, the curriculum needs to address issues of continuity and coherence, serve as a basis for curriculum discussion and development, provide guidance for new teachers, and present information for prospective families.

3. Reflection on Major Programs. Sub-teams, including a range of perspectives, should be formed to examine each major program area (subject areas, departments, and central non-academic programs) and write a brief report commenting on:

    a. the contribution to the mission,

    b. the consistency of activities with the School's beliefs about teaching and learning,

    c. planned continuity across grade levels,

    d. appropriateness of offerings for the full range of the student body,

    e. pedagogical approaches employed,

    f. contribution to achieving the School's goals for students and students' goals for themselves,

    g. adequacy of available resources,

    h. related professional development, and

    i. ways in which the program might be strengthened.

These reports will be included in the Supplementary Materials Inventory and will provide the basis for the School's overall response to appropriate standards in the Self Study.

4. Surveys. The School will survey parents, faculty, students (middle and secondary schools), and alumni/ae (secondary schools). The School may design its own surveys, but should include questions based on the survey questions suggested by CAIS. The results should be

summarized, given to all Self Study teams, and included in the Supplementary Materials for the Visiting Team.

5. Statistics. The School will compile statistics on admissions and on student performance.

6. Documents. The School will gather together existing policy documents, plans, and handbooks.

7. Finances. The School will prepare historical information (for at least two prior years) on school finances and will schedule a financial review or audit by an independent accountant or arrange for an approved alternative report on finances.

Self Study Cover Sheet and Introduction

The School must complete the Self Study Cover Data Sheet and write a brief introduction to the Self Study that provides a narrative description of the history, mission, and culture of the School. This is intended to give an introduction to the School to the Visiting Team and the CMA when they review the Self Study Report. Parts of it may be copied and included in the Visiting Team report.

Self Study Part I: Reviewing the Standards

Each standard must be addressed separately in the Self Study Report. The School should appoint a number of Self Study teams, each responsible for one or more standards. The teams should proceed as follows:

1. Gather and review relevant information from program subteam reports, surveys, handbooks, policy manuals, compilations of data, etc.
2. Discuss the standard and suggested indicators, identify other possible indicators relevant to the School, assess compliance with the standard, and identify questions to be asked and people to be interviewed.
3. Interview individuals and convene groups to discuss the School's compliance with the standard and to explore further actions that the School might take in this regard.

4. <u>Draft the section of the Self Study for the standard. It should include four elements</u>:

● a narrative description of the School's position with regard to the standard.
● a description of the process followed by the team inquiring into the standard.
● specific statements on whether or not the School complies with each indicator for the standard.
● documentation that the standard is met or a detailed explanation of proposed steps to bring the School into compliance, the resources available, and the timetable for this to be accomplished.

Self Study Part II: Reflection, Recommendations, and Issues for Further Discussion

Part II in the CAIS manual requires schools to submit a one to three page document (Reflections/Issues) that may be philosophic, action-oriented or both.

An assignment as comprehensive and as self-reflective as the publication of a CAIS Self Study is guaranteed to generate a variety of questions, concerns, ideas and commitments from those who participated in the Self Study and those who review it before submission to CAIS. Part II enables the School to present these findings in different formats; either as Major Recommendations that are self-identified and are action-oriented or as Issues for Further Discussion in which the goal is simply to extend important conversations generated by the Self Study – conversations about issues and opportunities that do not have clear outcomes. Schools may choose to include both action items and discussion items in CAIS Part II. Part II is intended to be a macro-look at major findings, presented in a one to three page report which should be completed as the final portion and submitted with the Self Study.

It is worth noting that most schools accurately predict the issues that appear as "Major Recommendations" in Visiting Team reports. The purpose of CAIS Part II is not to pre-empt the Visiting Team report, or to steer the team toward the School's preferred concerns. Rather, it provides the School with an opportunity to demonstrate that the process has led to new understandings about the School, *by the School*. Some of the major and minor recommendations offered by Visiting Teams may therefore be presented as affirmations of the School's analysis – as opposed to having the appearance of being entirely generated by external visitors.

CAIS Part II is an opportunity for a school to present a thoughtful, reflective, creative summary of its most significant concerns, hopes and dreams for the future.

Completion of Self Study

Five to six weeks before the visit, the School should send the completed Self Study to the Executive Director and the Director of Accreditation Services in electronic form. Once approved, four weeks before the visit, the School should send the Self Study to the Visiting Team members, in hard copy, and electronically, as a Word document, and shared in Google. The required financial documents should be provided to the Executive Director, the Director of Accreditation Services, and the chair of the Visiting Team.

Letter from Head of School

The Head of School may present a written report to the members of the Visiting Team to identify actions which have already been taken by the School in response to the Self Study, express his or her feelings about the Self Study, raise any questions or concerns, and discuss priorities for the next several years.

School Data Sheet

The School must complete the School Data Sheet, which includes writing a brief introduction to the Self Study that provides a narrative description of the history, mission, and culture of the School. This is intended to give an introduction to the School, to the Visiting Team, and to the Commission when they review the Self Study Report. Parts of it may be copied and included in the Visiting Team Report.

SCHOOL DATA SHEET

(To be completed and submitted with the Self Study; this sheet will be copied and included with the Visiting Team Report)

Name of School

Address   **City, State**

Phone   **Website**   **Date of Founding**

Enrollment at the time of Self Study Submission   **Total Enrollment:** _____

	PS	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	PG	Totals
Male																
Female																
Non-binary																
Day																
Boarding																

Number of Faculty _____ **full-time;** _____ **part-time**

Number of Administrators _____ **full-time;** _____ **part-time**

Brief Statement of School's history and mission - what makes this school unique? *(Please attach as a separate document)*

Person(s) completing this form: _____ Date: _____

Faculty Preference Questionnaire

Name: _____

The concrete task of the Self Study is to produce a report which examines how well our school meets the standards of the Connecticut Association of Independent Schools and how we might improve our school.

All faculty and professional staff will need to participate in and support the production of this report. In the process we will look at what we say we do and how well we actually do it. We will also identify and make recommendations for improvement. We will complete our Self Study in three stages:

Preparation for the Self Study – All faculty members will serve as members of the program team and will participate in the review of the School's major programs. Our "programs" include all academic departments, major extracurricular programs, sports, community service, and so on.

You will be assigned to a program sub-team, possibly outside of your subject area. If you particularly yearn to know more about the math department or athletic department (or anything else), please indicate (and rank) your preferences here:

Self Study Part I: Reviewing the Standards: In addition, each faculty and staff member will serve on at least one other team, responsible for writing a section of the Self Study report addressing one or more of the CAIS Standards. Please indicate below, with a "1," "2," and '3' your team preferences.

_____ **Standard 1 (Mission):** There is congruence between the School's stated mission and core values and its actual program, policies, planning, and decision-making at the operational and governance levels.

_____ **Standard 2 (Governance):** The School has an appropriate system of governance that assures that the School remains true to its mission and that it has the necessary resources to support its present and prospective operations.

_____ **Standard 3 (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice):** The School has created and continues to foster a program, culture and inclusive community of students, families, trustees, faculty and staff that embrace the multitude of perspectives, cultures, backgrounds and identities in our world.

_____ **Standard 4 (Program):** The School provides a comprehensive program of intellectual, aesthetic, and physical activities that stems from the School's beliefs about teaching and learning, is appropriate to support its mission and core values, and effectively addresses the needs of the range of students admitted. Program planning is informed by relevant research regarding how students learn and the knowledge and capacities they will need to lead purposeful and constructive lives.

Standard 5 (Early Childhood Program): The early childhood program enriches the social, intellectual, and developmental needs of its students by providing appropriate programs, adequate staffing, and sufficient resources and facilities.

Standard 6 (Residential Program and/or Homestay Program): The residential program and/or homestay program provide for an intentional curriculum, appropriate facilities, engaging activities, and adequate supervision to meet the needs of each student.

Standard 7 (Resources to Support the Program): Given the School's mission, there are adequate resources (space, equipment, technology, materials, and community) to support the School's program.

Standard 8 (Experience of the Students): The School actively considers individual students and has developed plans, policies, programs, and pedagogy to nurture, support, and encourage all students to reach their potential and to participate in the life of the School.

Standard 9 (Faculty): The School ensures that there are sufficient and trained administrators, faculty/staff members dedicated to supporting students and their families across all cultures. The School follows a comprehensive and defined program of professional development that supports   enhancement of teachers' skills.

Standard 10 (Administration): The administration provides leadership and maintains a structure to facilitate the effective functioning of the School, including the participation of faculty in decision- making.

Standard 11 (Communication): The School maintains effective systems of external and internal communication and record keeping that inform all constituents and facilitate participation.

Standard 12 (Enrollment): The admissions process assures that those students who enroll are appropriate, given the School's mission, and are likely to benefit from their experience at the School.

Standard 13 (Evaluation and Assessment): The School engages in forms of programmatic assessment consistent with fulfilling its mission and core values. Thisdata is used to inform decision-making and planning.

Standard 14 (Infrastructure): There are adequate resources (personnel, finances, facilities, equipment, and materials) to provide for the overall institutional needs of the School

Standard 15 (Health and Safety): The School is a safe and healthy place for students and faculty.

Standard 16 (The Accreditation Process): The School is fully committed to institutional   improvement and to the process of accreditation. The School completed an

inclusive Self Study, conducted in a spirit of full disclosure and following CAIS guidelines; responds to recommendations from the Commission on Membership and Accreditation, and the requirement to meet all Standards; and participates fully in the peer review process, hosting a visiting committee, and sending personnel to serve on visiting committees to other institutions.

_____ **I have no team preference.** Please make use of me by assigning me to any of these options. I am pleased to help make our school a better place!

Self Study Part II: Reflection, Recommendations, and Issues for Further Discussion

: When we have completed our examination of the School's compliance with the CAIS Standards, a representative team will be appointed to reflect on what we have learned, formulate recommendations for school improvement, and identify issues for further discussion.

☐ Please check this box to indicate you would be interested in serving on the team to reflect on our findings, draft recommendations, and identify issues for further discussion.

☐ Please check this box to indicate you would be willing to help edit and proofread the final report: (NOTE: You still need to indicate team choices in stage 2, above.)

Thank you so much for your enthusiasm and care in filling out this form. Let me know if you have questions or second thoughts about your choices. You will receive your team assignments and a calendar for the Self Study at the faculty meeting on _____.

Suggested Calendar for Self Study

Please access the CAIS website (www.caisct.org), and under the Accreditation tab, view the *Phases of Accreditation* document for a clear guide as to who does what and when during the accreditation process.

Initial Steps (Complete the semester before starting the Self Study):
- Contact CAIS Director of Accreditation Services to arrange to meet with faculty
- Obtain necessary materials from CAIS office
- Determine Self Study coordinator(s)
- Organize steering team
- Establish calendar including necessary professional days for accreditation work
- Confirm (or draft) a written description of the curriculum in a form appropriate to the School
- Review mission statement with faculty and board

Preparation for the Self Study

Fall Visit	Spring Visit	
August/September	December/January	- Faculty presentation by Director of Accreditation Services - Survey faculty for interest in Self Study teams - Form Self Study teams for all Standards
September/October	January/February	- Survey parents, faculty, and students - Compile survey results for self-study committees - Assemble policy documents, existing plans, and handbooks for self-study committees - Gather statistics on enrollment (admissions and attrition) and student performance - Include all of the above in the Supplementary Materials
September/November	January/March	- Convene program subcommittees for all departments and other major programs. Each committee should write a brief report about their area with regard to the program standards (4-6) and make recommendations for ways in which the program might be strengthened. These reports will be given to the self-study committees and will be made available to the visiting committee. - Arrange for necessary financial reports and information.

Self Study Part I: Reviewing the Standards

Fall Visit	Spring Visit	
December/February	March/June	- Convene Self Study teams for all Standards. - Each team should review background information, respond to the indicators, identify issues for further inquiry, and assign research and interviews.
January/April	March/June/ September	- Each team drafts a report on the School's position with regard to the Standard for which they are responsible - documenting compliance or outlining plans to come into compliance. - Each team drafts recommendations related to the Standard that would enhance the students' experience and foster school improvement.
March/April	September	All teams share their draft reports and recommendations with the entire faculty for comment and make appropriate revisions.

Self Study Part II: Reflection, Recommendations, and Issues for Further Discussion

Fall Visit	Spring Visit	
March/May	September/November	- Convene a representative group to review, compile, and reflect on findings and recommendations from all Self Study teams. - Draft the Part II Report: Reflection, Recommendations, and Issues for Further Discussion.
May/June	November/December	Share the draft Part II Report with the entire faculty for comment and make appropriate revisions.

Prepare for Visiting Team

- Reserve hotel rooms as soon as the date for the visit is set.

- Invite Chair to visit the School when his/her name is received.

- Gather and organize Supplementary Materials Inventory as the Self Study proceeds.

- *Send Self Study Report in electronic form **first** to CAIS Executive Director and Director of Accreditation Services 5-6 weeks prior to visit. **After their review and approval**, send a copy to the Visiting Team (one month before visit)...hard copy, electronic Google doc and Word doc.

Staff Information Sheet
(ALPHABETICAL STAFF OVERVIEW FORM [PG 35] MAY BE USED IN LIEU OF THIS FORM)

Name

Last	First	Middle	Yr. Appointed	Title	Teaching Assignment

Gender   **Residence**

☐ Female   ☐ Male   ☐ On-Campus Housing ☐ Dormitory ☐ Off-campus

Secondary School

Name	Location	Year Graduated

Higher Education Completed or Underway

Institution	Major/Minor	Dates Attended Mo/Yr	Mo/Yr	Degree Awarded

Prior Teaching/Administrative Experience

Institution/Location	Dates Employed Mo/Yr	Mo/Yr	Title or Teaching Assignment

Memberships (related to school responsibilities)

CURRENT ASSIGNMENTS

Teaching Assignments - Current School Year

Course Titles and/or Subjects and Grade Levels	# of Students in Class

Supervisory Duties: Study Hall, Playground, Cafeteria, Dormitory, etc.

Extra-Curricular and Sports Assignment by Level and Season

Administrative Responsibilities

Team Assignments

Alphabetical Staff Overview
(STAFF INFORMATION SHEETS MAY BE USED IN LIEU OF THIS FORM)

Name (last name, first)	M/F	Teaching/Administrative Responsibilities	Degree(s)	Years Experience	Years at School

SAMPLE QUESTIONNAIRES

In the preparatory phase of the Self Study, schools are to survey parents, faculty, and students (as appropriate) on issues covered by the standards. The results of these surveys should be compiled and given to the several Self Study teams as background information to inform their discussions.

The attached questionnaires are samples. Schools may use these as is, add questions to those that are suggested, or design their own form. The suggested questions relate to standards and are sufficiently similar to allow comparisons of responses across constituencies. On-line survey forms may be used such as SurveyMonkey (http://www.surveymonkey.com/home.asp).

The completed questionnaires, together with the compilation of results, should be included in the Supplementary Inventory for review by the Visiting Team.

Parent Questionnaire

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. I believe that the School's mission is matched by what is actually happening in the program and that the School does what it says it does.					
2. I find that the admission process is effective in enrolling students who are appropriate and likely to benefit from their experience at the School.					
3. I find the School provides a comprehensive program of intellectual, aesthetic, and physical activities that serve the interests of my child.					
4. I believe that the School offers a variety of experiences to reflect the diversity of the students enrolled and the multicultural nature of society itself.					
5. I believe the School actively takes into consideration the individual needs, learning styles, and characteristics of students by providing developmentally appropriate programs and activities to help students achieve their potential.					
6. I feel that the teachers provide a positive learning experience for my child, and that throughout my child's experience at the School he/she has found thoughtful and skilled faculty.					
7. I find that policies are administered fairly and reflect the core values of the School.					
8. I believe that the methods used to assess my child's work at the School are clear, fair, and helpful.					
9. I believe that the School is a safe, clean, well-organized place that nurtures learning and mutual respect among students and teachers.					
10. I find that the School has an effective system of communicating important information to the parents.					
11. I feel that the School has sufficient resources to meet the needs of my child.					

We welcome any comments that will help the School reflect on opportunities for school improvement.

Faculty Questionnaire

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. I believe that the School's mission is matched by what is actually happening in the program and that the School does what it says it does.					
2. I find that the admission process is effective in enrolling students who are appropriate and likely to benefit from their experience at the School.					
3. I believe the program that the School offers is sufficiently broad to meet the needs of all students.					
4. I believe the School encourages me to shape my program to include a variety of experiences which reflect the diversity of the students enrolled and the multicultural nature of society itself.					
5. In my teaching I take into consideration the individual needs, learning styles, and characteristics of students by providing developmentally appropriate programs and activities to help students achieve their potential.					
6. As a faculty member I feel that I am treated with respect and given opportunities for professional development.					
7. I find that policies are administered fairly and reflect the core values of the School, and I am given an opportunity to participate in the decision-making process.					
8. I believe that faculty evaluation at the School is clear, fair, and helpful to me.					
9. I believe that the School is a safe, clean, well-organized place that nurtures learning and mutual respect among students and teachers.					
10. I find that the School maintains internal and external communication in an effective manner.					
11. I feel that the School has sufficient resources for me, as a teacher, to meet the needs of students.					

We welcome any comments that will help the School reflect on opportunities for school improvement.

Student Questionnaire

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. I believe that the School's mission is matched by what is actually happening in the program and that the School does what it says it does.					
2. I find that the admission process is effective in enrolling students who are appropriate and likely to benefit from their experience at the School.					
3. I find the School provides a comprehensive program of intellectual, aesthetic, and physical activities that meets my needs.					
4. I believe the School engages me in a variety of experiences that reflect the diversity of the student body and the multicultural nature of society.					
5. I believe the School actively takes into consideration my individual needs, learning style, and characteristics by providing developmentally appropriate programs and activities to help me achieve my potential.					
6. I feel there are faculty to whom I can turn for advice both in academic and personal issues.					
7. Discipline and other policies are applied fairly and reflect the core values of the School.					
8. I believe that the methods used to assess my work at the School are clear, fair, and helpful.					
9. I believe that the School is a safe, clean, well-organized place that nurtures learning and mutual respect among students and teachers.					
10. I find that the School has an effective system of communicating important information to the students.					
11. I feel that the School has sufficient resources to meet my needs.					

We welcome any comments that will help the School reflect on opportunities for school improvement.

_____

_____

SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS INVENTORY

These materials should be made available to the entire Visiting Team:

1. Printed copy of the Self Study plus electronic versions in Word and as a Google doc.
2. School catalog or descriptive brochure
3. Alphabetical Staff Overview Form or Staff Information Sheets for each faculty member and administrator
4. Daily program schedule including teacher assignments to facilitate planning visits to classes and interviews
5. A map of campus and interior layout of classroom, office, and residential buildings
6. Written bylaws describing the school's governance structure

Along with the above-listed items, these materials should be made available to the CAIS Executive Director and the Director of Accreditation Services (one copy each) 5-6 weeks prior to the date of the visit:

1. The current operating budget and most recent year-to-date report
2. The operating statement for the most recently completed year: compare budgeted figures and actual experience
3. A review or opinion level audit or approved alternative, e.g., Diocesan Report on School Finances
4. Salary tables for full-time teaching faculty: high, low, median for current year and five years ago
5. Salary schedule or policy for faculty teaching part-time
6. List of benefits and percentage of cost/premiums paid by school
7. The School's response to NBOA's Practical Guidance for Independent School Business Operations.

These materials should be gathered and arranged for easy access in the Visiting Team's meeting room:

1. Parent, Faculty, and Student Questionnaires, together with compilation and summary of findings
2. Forms used in evaluation of professional staff
3. A description of the curriculum in a form appropriate to the School
4. Admissions and recruiting materials, including brochures and catalogs
5. Information regarding financial responsibilities which is given to parents prior to enrollment
6. All current planning documents
7. Student, faculty, parent handbooks
8. Calendar for the School year
9. Sample copies of publications
10. Sample copies of forms used to collect or record information about students
11. Sample Copies of student report cards

12. Sample copies of forms used to collect data from former students
13. Profile of student body as shown by aptitude and/or achievement testing. (Provide samples of tests.)
14. Any other documents or information that would prove useful to the Visiting Team as the members develop their report.

The Visiting Team Process

Appointment of the Visiting Team: The CAIS Executive Director will consult with the Head of School in identifying the chair of the Visiting Team and determining the size of the team and any special areas of focus. A member of the Commission on Membership and Accreditation will serve as Vice-Chair, or possibly Chair of the Visiting Committee. The selection of the Visiting Team is the responsibility of the CAIS Director of Accreditation Services.

Scheduling the Visit: Visiting Teams are scheduled to arrive on a Sunday afternoon and depart on the following Wednesday afternoon. The School, in consultation with the CAIS Director of Accreditation Services and the Chair of the Visiting Team, will select the dates for the visit well ahead of time to facilitate planning. Fall visits are scheduled from the last week in September to the first week in November, and spring visits from the last week in March through the end of April.

Setting the Schedule: Once the chair of the Visiting Team has been confirmed, the Head of School and the Chair will identify meetings which will be scheduled during the visit and those people who should be available.

Accommodations: The School is responsible for arranging housing for all team members for three nights. Accommodations should be in a local hotel or motel and provide a private room and bath for each member, as well as a meeting room.

Meals: The School is responsible for meals. Details of the schedule should be worked out with the Visiting Team chair, but, ordinarily, the team will have lunches provided in their workroom at the School. If breakfast is not available at the hotel, it may also be provided at the School. Most teams prefer to have working dinners on Monday and Tuesday, either at the hotel or a local restaurant. On Sunday, the School customarily holds a reception for faculty and other members of the School community and hosts a dinner for the team and a few select members of the School community. The team has a great deal of work to accomplish in a short time and, therefore, social events and entertainment should be kept to a minimum and scheduled only in consultation with the Chair. The School is expected to make the team comfortable, but should avoid extravagant expenses.

Arrangements at the School: The Visiting Team must have a private meeting room, including WiFi, and access to a printer and copy machine at the School which is for their use only during the visit. Refreshments should be provided during the days of the visit. The Visiting Team chair will discuss needed arrangements for access to computers.

What to Expect from the Visiting Team: The team will receive and study the Self Study Report prior to their arrival. Their charge is to understand the School on its own terms, assess

and validate the accuracy of the Self Study, determine compliance with Standards for Accreditation, review the Part II Report: Reflection, Recommendations, and Issues for Further Discussion, write a report that includes commendations and recommendations, and make a recommendation to the CMA regarding accreditation.

The School should expect Visiting Team members to be at the School all day on Monday and Tuesday and some members may be at the School on Wednesday morning. While the presence of the visitors will obviously not go unnoticed, the School is asked to maintain as normal a routine as possible. Team members will interview faculty, administration, parents, students, and board members. If reasonably possible, they will try to talk individually with all faculty and staff. A team member responsible for reviewing a section of the Self Study may seek out those who participated in drafting that section.

Members of the team will visit classes in order to gain a flavor of the academic program. Teachers should not schedule tests, field trips, or films during these three days. The visitors will be observing interactions among students and between students and faculty. They will note teaching methods and instructional materials. Depending on the size of the School, not all teachers will be observed or interviewed, although an attempt will be made to observe a representative number of faculty members. The Visiting Team is looking at the entire program; they will not evaluate individual faculty, staff, or administrators and will not comment on the performance of any individual, or identify them by name in the Visiting Team report.

At the end of their visit, members of the Visiting Team will first vote on the School's compliance with each of the standards using the "Assessment of Standard" template below.

Assessment of Standard	
Met *(The students' experience is supported.)*	**Unmet** *(The students' experience is compromised.)*
_____ SM1. Standard Met: evidences clear understanding, effective implementation and thorough planning for further improvement.	_____ SU1. Standard Unmet: evidences inadequate understanding, implementation and planning for remediation that may possibly compromise student experience.

_____ SM2. Standard Met: evidences understanding, evolving implementation and planning for improvement.	_____ SU2. Standard Unmet: lacks understanding, implementation and planning for remediation, thereby compromising student experience.
_____SM3. Standard Met at the Minimum Level: implementation and planning for improvement required immediately.	

They will then proceed to vote on whether or not to grant initial or re-accreditation and under what conditions. Their report, votes on the standards, and recommendation regarding accreditation will be presented to the CMA at its next meeting.

The team departs on Wednesday after they have completed a draft of their report. The team is instructed not to share specifics of their report, however, since it has not been finalized. The chair and possibly another member of the team will meet with the Head of School and perhaps one or two other people on Wednesday afternoon to review major areas of comment in the report.

Commission Action

The Commission will review the report of the Visiting Team and its recommendation concerning accreditation, including votes on the standards, at its next meeting. After discussion, they will vote on one of the following options:

- Initial accreditation (5 years + 5 renewable)
- Re-accreditation (5 years + 5 renewable)
- Accreditation for a shorter period of time
- Action delayed for a specific length of time
- Accreditation subject to probation or warning
- Denial of membership

If a school recommended for initial membership does not meet all the Standards, action on their accreditation will be tabled until compliance has been documented. The Commission may ask the staff to follow-up with the School on particular concerns or may schedule a formal focused visit to inquire into progress the School has made.

In addition to any special reports or visits, all schools are required to file Interim Evaluation Reports after two years (on Major Recommendations) and five years (on all Recommendations), which document progress and accomplishments in the follow-up process.

Budget for the Self Study and Visit: The cost of the Self Study will depend on how the School organizes the work. A large or complex school may find it necessary to grant a course reduction to the Self Study coordinator or to hire someone familiar with the School to assume this role. If there is extensive editing to be done, this may call for additional compensation. Secretarial work may or may not fit into the regular schedule of school staff. The actual cost of duplicating the final report and mailing it to the team members may be estimated.

The School may estimate its expenses for the Visiting Team fairly accurately once the size of the team is known. The primary expenses are three nights lodging with a private room and bath for each team member, a meeting room at the hotel, meals from Sunday dinner through Wednesday lunch, and travel expenses of team members. The School is also responsible for the expenses of the Visiting Team chair for a pre-visit and for preparing the Visiting Team report.

www.caisct.org

Accreditation Documents

CAIS Accreditation Manual

The CAIS Accreditation Process

Phases of Accreditation

CAIS Standards for Accreditation

CAIS Handbook for Visiting Team Chairs

CAIS Handbook for Visiting Teams

Virtual Visit Guidelines

Revised 9.24.21