



Public School Standards



Council on Accreditation and School Improvement

Southern Association of Colleges and Schools



Permission to reproduce this material for non-profit use by a school as part of its improvement planning process is granted with appropriate attribution to SACS CASI. For all other reproduction of this material, prior written consent must be obtained from SACS CASI.

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Inc. and schools accredited by SACS do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, or national origin. The maintenance of a single-sex school is not discrimination on the basis of sex.

ACCREDITATION STANDARDS 2005
for Public Schools serving students in Kindergarten through Grade 12



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Council on Accreditation and School Improvement acknowledges the contributions of members of the Committee on Standards who provided the leadership for the development of Accreditation Standards 2005.

DEVELOPMENT TEAM

Dr. Gurney E. Chambers, Co-Chair of the Development Team
Director, North Carolina Council on Accreditation and School Improvement

Mrs. Linda Warford, Co-Chair of the Development Team
Associate Executive Director, SACS Council on Accreditation and School Improvement

Ms. Debbie Schremser, Consultant
Alabama State Department of Education, Montgomery, Alabama

Dr. Hartzel Jennings, Principal, Roosevelt Elementary School
Brevard County Schools,

Ms. Johnnie Miller, Retired Teacher
DeKalb County Schools, Decatur, Georgia

Dr. Robert J. Storer, Superintendent
Walton-Verona Independent School District, Walton, Kentucky

Miss Katherine Landry, Principal, Woodvale Elementary School
Lafayette Parish Schools, Lafayette, Louisiana

Mrs. Dianne Walker, Assistant Superintendent
Gulfport School District, Gulfport, Mississippi

Dr. Darrell Barringer, Principal, White Knoll Elementary School
West Columbia, South Carolina

Ms. Pat Ashcraft, Director of Staff Development
Shelby County Schools, Memphis, Tennessee

Ms. Sharon Milham, Principal, Florence Hill Elementary School
Grand Prairie Independent School District, Grand Prairie, Texas

Dr. Stewart Roberson, Superintendent
Hanover County Public Schools, Ashland, Virginia

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword ii

Accreditation Standards 1

Beliefs and Mission. 2

Governance and Leadership 3

Curriculum. 4

Instruction 5

Assessment and Evaluation 6

Resources 7

Support Services for Student Learning 10

Stakeholder Communications and Relationships 11

Citizenship 12

Continuous Process of School Improvement. 13

Appendix A: Additional Resources 14

Appendix B: Equivalent Credit for Professional Education. 15

Appendix C: Equivalent Credit for Administrators 16

Appendix D: Equivalent Credit for Professional Growth. 17

Appendix E: Glossary of Terms. 18

Appendix F: Checklist for Early Childhood Programs 20

FOREWORD

The initial project of the consolidation of the Commissions on Elementary, Middle, and Secondary Schools of the Southern Association Colleges and Schools (SACS) was to develop a set of quality standards for accreditation that would apply to all public schools accredited by the newly formed Council on Accreditation and School Improvement (CASI). Forged from research and best practice on effective schools and the wisdom of colleagues, the standards were crafted by a team of professionals that included input from representatives throughout the 11 state region. The standards present a common core of expectations that will directly link quality schools and accreditation. It is the desire and intent of the SACS CASI to raise the bar for schools that deserve recognition through accreditation.

The development of a set of standards common to all schools included several guidelines that directed the work of the committee. First, the standards were to reflect current research and best practice on schooling. Therefore, research documents such as the National Study of School Evaluation's **Indicators of Schools of Quality**, Volume 1, guided the work of crafting the new standards. Second, the standards were to reflect a consolidation of existing standards designed for elementary, middle, and secondary schools. Third, the standards were to express a singular statement of expectation. All reasonable and viable alternatives to meeting the basic intent of standards were also to be included where appropriate and footnoted wherever necessary.

Standards for accreditation are an integral part of the accreditation process. The next generation of accreditation and school improvement is based, first, on an internationally recognized definition of accreditation: Accredited schools (a) meet standards, (b) engage in continuous improvement, and (c) provide for quality assurance. Second, the next generation of accreditation and school improvement is based on the principle that all schools should engage in one, and only one, continuous process of improvement; and, that while there are several processes or frameworks available to schools, all effective processes share four common elements: Vision, Profile, Plan, and Results.

Member institutions must meet the standards and comply with the policies and procedures of SACS CASI to achieve or continue accreditation. The administrative head of the school is responsible for ensuring and reporting the institution's compliance with the standards for accreditation on an annual basis. Additionally, the school must provide a summary of evidence that demonstrate how the school meets each of the ten standards for accreditation as part of the SACS CASI Guided Self-Study. Finally, the SACS CASI Quality Assurance Review Team visiting the institution is responsible for validating compliance with the standards for accreditation.

Accreditation Standards 2005 represent a set of rigorous academic standards that are designed to preserve the integrity of the schooling process for children. As such, it is the intent of SACS CASI that the Accreditation Standards 2005 provide schools with the guidance and support to develop and maintain a quality program with services that reflects a commitment to student success.

Beliefs and Mission

The school communicates a vision, statement of beliefs, and mission that provide a focus for improving the performance of both the students and the school.

Governance and Leadership

The school and governing board promote the capacity of stakeholders to improve student learning by providing appropriate leadership, governance, and organization.

Curriculum

The school offers a research-based curriculum that supports best practices and clearly defines expectations for student learning.

Instruction

The school employs instructional strategies and provides services that facilitate the learning for all students.

Assessment and Evaluation

The school uses a comprehensive assessment system to monitor and evaluate student learning and to improve curriculum and instruction.

Resources

The school has sufficient human, financial, physical, and material resources to support its vision, mission, and goals.

Support Services for Student Learning

The school has a comprehensive program of guidance and other services that supports the development and well being of all students.

Stakeholder Communications and Relationships

The school fosters effective communications and relationships with and among its stakeholders.

Citizenship

The school helps students develop civic, social, and personal responsibility.

Continuous Process of School Improvement

The school establishes, implements, and monitors a continuous process of improvement that focuses on student performance.

Standard 1 Beliefs and Mission

The school communicates a vision, statement of beliefs, and mission that provide a focus for improving the performance of both the students and the school.

In fulfillment of this standard, the school:

- 1.1 Engages its stakeholders in a collaborative process;
- 1.2 Ensures its vision, mission, and beliefs define a compelling purpose and direction that focus on improving student learning;
- 1.3 Uses its vision, mission, and beliefs as a guide to improving teaching and learning and the operation of the school;
- 1.4 Ensures its vision, mission, and beliefs reflect current research and best practice;
- 1.5 Reviews its vision, mission, and beliefs annually and revises them when appropriate; and
- 1.6 Builds understanding of the vision, mission, and beliefs among stakeholders.

Standard 2 Governance and Leadership

The school and governing board promote the capacity of stakeholders to improve student learning by providing appropriate leadership, governance, and organization.

Governance

In fulfillment of this standard, the school operates under a governing board that:

- 2.1 Adopts policies and procedures that provide for effective operation of the school;
- 2.2 Recognizes and preserves the executive, administrative, and leadership prerogatives of the administrative head of the school; and
- 2.3 Permits the administrative team of the school to implement policies and procedures without interference.

Leadership

In fulfillment of this standard, the leadership of the school:

- 2.4 Maintains a vision, mission, and direction that focus on student learning;
- 2.5 Ensures that the curriculum is enacted, supported, and assessed;
- 2.6 Involves faculty and staff in decisions that affect the entire school;
- 2.7 Allocates and aligns the human, instructional, financial, and physical resources to support student learning;
- 2.8 Fosters ongoing professional development within the learning community;
- 2.9 Implements a written security and crisis management plan that provides appropriate training for staff and students; and
- 2.10 Controls all activities, including extra-curricular, that are sponsored by the school.

Standard 3 Curriculum

The school offers a research-based curriculum that supports best practices and clearly defines expectations for student learning.*

In fulfillment of this standard, the school:

- 3.1 Offers a curriculum that is based on clearly defined expectations for student learning;
- 3.2 Ensures that each content area of the curriculum includes a set of essential knowledge and skills;
- 3.3 Aligns the expectations for student learning with the various subject areas and grade levels;
- 3.4 Offers a curriculum that challenges each student to excel and that reflects a commitment to equity, an appreciation of diversity, and a recognition of different ways of learning;
- 3.5 Uses curriculum guides and support materials as a basis for implementing the curriculum;
- 3.6 Ensures that the professional staff collaboratively gathers, analyzes, and uses data and research to evaluate the curriculum;
- 3.7 Provides a balanced curriculum that is based on a knowledge of human growth and development and sound learning principles;
- 3.8 Uses community resources to support and enhance the curriculum;
- 3.9 Offers a curriculum that includes interdisciplinary and cross-curricular experiences;
- 3.10 Offers a curriculum that includes study in fine and applied arts, music, and physical education;
- 3.11 Provides extra-curricular activities that are based on the beliefs and mission of the school and that meet the needs and interests of the students; and
- 3.12 Maintains and communicates to stakeholders a set of policies, procedures, and guidelines that govern student participation in school-sponsored extra-curricular activities.

* Schools that provide an early childhood program (below kindergarten age) must apply the Checklist for Early Childhood Programs (see page 21, Appendix F) to this standard.

Standard 4 Instruction

The school employs instructional strategies and provides services that facilitate learning for all students.

In fulfillment of this standard, the school:

- 4.1 Aligns instruction with the school's mission, expectations for student learning, and action plans;
- 4.2 Ensures that student performance is frequently assessed and the results used to improve instruction;
- 4.3 Employs instructional strategies and activities that are research-based and reflective of best practice;
- 4.4 Allocates sufficient time for student learning and ensures that it is protected;
- 4.5 Sustains a climate that is conducive to teaching and learning;
- 4.6 Promotes the active involvement of students in the learning process, and ensures that they have opportunities to acquire higher order thinking skills and to apply the skills and their learning in diverse ways;
- 4.7 Employs a variety of instructional strategies, remediation, enrichment, and learning activities that accommodate diverse learning styles;
- 4.8 Uses a variety of human, natural, technological, and material resources to enhance instruction and learning;
- 4.9 Provides instructional technology, materials, and resources supportive of curriculum and instruction;
- 4.10 Grants credit based on defined performance criteria and a minimum of 130 clock hours of instruction (at the secondary level);
- 4.11 Provides a school year of at least 175 days during which students and teachers engage in teaching and learning activities; and
- 4.12 Requires a minimum of 25 hours of planned learning activities per week (for grades 1 through 12).

Standard 5 Assessment and Evaluation

The school uses a comprehensive assessment system to monitor and evaluate student learning and to improve curriculum and instruction.

In fulfillment of this standard, the school:

- 5.1 Employs key indicators and performance expectations for student learning;
- 5.2 Collects and disaggregates data continuously to monitor and evaluate student learning;
- 5.3 Maintains a current, comprehensive profile of student performance data, community characteristics, school characteristics, and stakeholder perceptions of the school;
- 5.4 Uses data in making decisions for continuous improvement;
- 5.5 Conducts a periodic analysis of instructional and organizational effectiveness and uses the results to improve student learning;
- 5.6 Communicates assessment results in a timely manner to all stakeholders; and
- 5.7 Identifies in its improvement plans measurable performance standards that take into account student learning needs, state and local student performance requirements, and the goals of the curriculum.

Standard 6 Resources

The school has sufficient human, financial, physical, and material resources to support its vision, mission, and goals.

Human Resources

In fulfillment of this standard, the school:

- 6.1 Employs an administrative head and administrative or supervisory assistants who have an earned graduate degree with 18 semester hours in administration or supervision (as a part of, or in addition to the degree) from an institution recognized by a U.S. regional accrediting agency**; (see note 1, 2, and 4)
- 6.2 Provides and assigns staff that is sufficient to meet the vision, mission and goals of the school:

Membership	1 - 249	250 - 499	500 - 749	750 - 999	1000 – 1249	1250 – 1499	1500 - up
Administrative Head	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Administrative or Supervisory Assistants	0	.5 0 (elem)	1 .5 (elem)	1.5 1 (elem)	2 1.5 (elem)	2.5 2 (elem)	One (full-time equivalent) staff member shall be added <i>where needed</i> for each additional 250 students over 1,500.
Guidance Professionals	.5	1 .5 (elem)	1.5 1 (elem)	2 1.5 (elem)	2.5 2 (elem)	3 2.5 (elem)	
Library or Media Specialists	.5	1	1	1	2* (secondary) 1 (middle-elem)	2* (secondary) 1 (middle-elem)	
Support staff for administration, library media, or technology	1 .5 (elem)	2.5 1 (elem)	4 1.5 (elem)	4.5 2.5 (elem)	5 3 (elem)	5.5 3 (elem)	6 3 (elem)

* After employing one professionally qualified librarian or media specialist, the school may employ a professionally qualified technology or information specialist, assigned to the library media center, to meet the requirement.

- 6.3 Employs instructional personnel who have an earned bachelor’s degree that includes 12 semester hours of professional education (as part of, or in addition to the degree) from an institution recognized by a U.S. regional accrediting agency**; (see note 2 and 4)
- 6.4 Employs instructional personnel who have a college major (at least 24 semester hours) in their assigned field; (see note 1 and 2)

1 Professional personnel that meet the qualifications for certification or licensing by the state in which employed are in compliance.
 2 Professional personnel who do not hold the required degree or have not earned the specified credits must be actively enrolled in a program that leads to meeting the requirement within three years. Active enrollment means earning at least six semester hours of credit per academic year.
 3 Six semester hours of credit is equivalent to 120 clock hours of participation in professional development activities, e.g., workshops, seminars, conferences; and peer review team visits. (see page 18, Appendix D)
 4 Professional personnel who have training or experience that might be equivalent to the specified credits may request with justification that the State Council accept such training or experience in lieu of all or part of the requirement. (See page 16, Appendix B and page 17, Appendix C)

** U.S. Regional Accrediting Agencies: Southern Association Colleges and Schools; North Central Association of Schools and Colleges; Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools; Western Association of Schools and Colleges; New England Association of Colleges and Schools; and the Northwest Association of Accredited Schools.

- 6.5 Employs counselors and media specialists who have an earned graduate degree in their assigned field from an institution recognized by a U.S. regional accrediting agency**;
(see note 1 and 2)
- 6.6 Requires all professional personnel to earn at least six semester hours of credit or the equivalent during each five years of employment; (see note 3)
- 6.7 Implements a system of employee evaluation that protects the privacy of the individual and uses the results to improve performance;
- 6.8 Ensures that paraprofessionals are under the supervision of professional personnel and are qualified and trained to perform in their area of their responsibility;
- 6.9 Maintains and observes written policies relating to the qualifications, selection, training, and assignment of substitute teachers;
- 6.10 Ensures that all personnel are allocated time and resources for professional development activities;
- 6.11 Includes in the master schedule planning time unencumbered by instructional or supervisory responsibilities for each classroom teacher; and
- 6.12 Maintains class sizes that are consistent with state or federal guidelines and that support the learning process.

Financial Resources

In fulfillment of this standard, the school:

- 6.13 Budgets sufficient resources to support its vision, mission, beliefs, educational programs, and action plans for improvement;
- 6.14 Monitors all financial transactions through a recognized, regularly audited accounting system;
- 6.15 Controls all funds raised in the name of the school; and
- 6.16 Implements a remuneration plan for all members of the staff that recognizes the administrative head as the highest paid employee.

1 Professional personnel that meet the qualifications for certification or licensing by the state in which employed are in compliance.

2 Professional personnel who do not hold the required degree or have not earned the specified credits must be actively enrolled in a program that leads to meeting the requirement within three years. Active enrollment means earning at least six semester hours of credit per academic year.

3 Six semester hours of credit is equivalent to 120 clock hours of participation in professional development activities, e.g., workshops, seminars, conferences; and peer review team visits. (see page 18, Appendix D)

Physical Resources

In fulfillment of this standard, the school:

- 6.17 Complies with applicable local, state, and federal laws, standards, and regulations;
- 6.18 Maintains the site, facilities, and equipment to provide an environment that is healthy and safe for all occupants;
- 6.19 Possesses and implements a plan for maintaining and improving the site, facilities, and equipment; and
- 6.20 Provides facilities, equipment, and a site necessary for effective implementation of the instructional and extracurricular programs.

Material Resources

In fulfillment of this standard, the school operates a library media center that:

- 6.21 Maintains a comprehensive materials collection consisting of current media, books, reference sources, and periodicals in print and electronic formats that support student learning, the curriculum, and the instructional program;
- 6.22 Provides a balanced collection of a minimum of 10 books per student; (see note 5 and 6)
- 6.23 Ensures that all students and staff members have regular, ready access to media services, materials, and equipment;
- 6.24 Employs a currently accepted circulation system for materials;
- 6.25 Provides training on effective use of media resources for students and members of the professional staff;
- 6.26 Ensures that the media staff collaborates with other professional staff members to attain maximum benefit from the resources;
- 6.27 Possesses a policy and procedure for responding to challenged materials;
- 6.28 Budgets sufficient funds for library media services and resources, including equipment, to support the curricular and instructional programs; and
- 6.29 Possesses and communicates a policy on use of the Internet.

5 Middle and Secondary Schools with enrollment in excess of 1,500 students must provide at least 15,000 usable volumes. Elementary Schools with enrollment in excess of 1,000 students must provide at least 10,000 usable volumes. New schools must have at least four volumes per student upon opening and meet the collection requirements within three years.

6 Books available in electronic format may be counted for up to 25% of the number of books required for the school. In determining the number of books available in electronic format, the same title should be counted only once.

Standard 7 Support Services for Student Learning

The school has a comprehensive program of guidance and other services that supports the development and well being of all students.

In fulfillment of this standard, the school:

- 7.1 Provides students guidance services that include, but are not limited to, counseling, appraisal, staff consulting, referral, and educational and career planning;
- 7.2 Ensures that each student has access to an adult advisor, mentor, or counselor;
- 7.3 Provides student services in the areas of health, nutrition, safety, and transportation;
- 7.4 Provides appropriate support for students with special needs;
- 7.5 Facilitates securing the assistance of other agencies for students whose needs cannot be met by the school;
- 7.6 Maintains secure, accurate, and complete student record systems in accordance with state and federal law and regulations; and
- 7.7 Provides educational opportunities to help parents and teachers understand the various stages of student development.

Standard 8 Stakeholder Communications and Relationships

The school fosters effective communications and relationships with and among its stakeholders.

In fulfillment of this standard, the school:

- 8.1 Fosters partnerships through collaboration with community stakeholders to support student learning;
- 8.2 Ensures clear and effective communications among and between all stakeholders;
- 8.3 Solicits the knowledge and skills of parents to enhance the work of the school;
- 8.4 Monitors school climate and takes appropriate steps to ensure that it is conducive to student learning; and
- 8.5 Communicates to all stakeholders the expectations for student learning and the results of school improvement efforts.

Standard 9 Citizenship

The school helps students develop civic, social, and personal responsibility.

In fulfillment of this standard, the school:

- 9.1 Fosters and maintains a safe and orderly environment that promotes honesty, integrity, trustworthiness, responsibility, citizenship, self-discipline, and respect;
- 9.2 Provides students opportunities to develop and demonstrate leadership, responsibility, independence, and decision-making skills;
- 9.3 Communicates written guidelines for conduct to students, parents, and staff; and
- 9.4 Monitors student attendance and conduct.

Standard 10 Continuous Process of School Improvement

The school establishes, implements, and monitors a continuous process of improvement that focuses on student performance.

In fulfillment of this standard, the school:

- 10.1 Employs an active school improvement team composed of the administrative head, representative school staff, and community stakeholders;
- 10.2 Provides opportunities for stakeholders to contribute to the development and implementation of school improvement plan;
- 10.3 Engages in a continuous process of improvement that:
 - articulates the direction and purpose the school is pursuing for its future (vision);
 - provides a rich description of the current conditions with a focus on student learning (profile);
 - identifies what actions school personnel will take to improve student learning (plan); and
 - documents what has been accomplished and uses the results to inform what happens next (results).
- 10.4 Provides professional development for school personnel to help them implement school improvement plan;
- 10.5 Monitors and demonstrates progress in meeting school improvement goals; and
- 10.6 Communicates the results of improvement efforts to stakeholders.

APPENDIX A

Additional Resources

In addition to this publication on accreditation standards the following forms and information pages can be located at the SACS CASI web site www.sacscasi.org

- Performance Assessment
- Request for Variance from Standard
- Procedure for Requesting Extended Probation
- Complaint Certification Form
- Due Process

SACS CASI state and international offices maintain web sites that provide information and resources specific to your state affiliation. Additional web site information is listed below.

- Alabama www.sacscasi.org/Alabama
- Florida www.sacscasi.org/Florida
- Georgia www.sacscasi.org/Georgia
- Kentucky www.sacscasi.org/Kentucky
- Louisiana www.sacscasi.org/Louisiana
- Mississippi www.sacscasi.org/Mississippi
- North Carolina www.sacscasi.org/NorthCarolina
- South Carolina www.sacscasi.org/SouthCarolina
- Tennessee www.sacscasi.org/Tennessee
- Texas www.sacscasi.org/Texas
- Virginia www.sacscasi.org/Virginia
- Latin America www.sacscasi.org/LatinAmerica

APPENDIX B

Guidelines for Professional Education Equivalent Credit

Human Resource Indicator 6.3 on page 7 of the Accreditation Standards 2005 states, "In fulfillment of this standard, the school employs instructional personnel who have an earned bachelor's degree that includes 12 semester hours of professional education (as part of, or in addition to the degree) from an institution recognized by a U.S. regional accrediting agency."

In considering such a request, the State Council may apply the following guidelines:

Activity	Description	Equivalent Credit
Teaching Experience	Successful full-time teaching experience that was acquired at the level of and within the area of the teacher's present area of assignment.	2 years of full-time teaching experience = 3 semester hours of credit
Advanced Degree	Each advanced degree, e.g., master's and doctorate, which was earned from a regionally accredited institution and is pertinent to the teacher's present level and area of assignment.	Each earned advanced degree (e.g., Master's or Doctorate) = 3 semester hours of credit
In-service	In-service workshops, seminars, or training in which the teacher has participated within the last five years, provided the training was (1) conducted by a qualified trainer under aegis of an agency other than the school with which the teacher is affiliated; (2) was focused on instructional methodology and materials or human growth and development; and (3) is pertinent to the teacher's level and area of assignment.	10 clock hours of staff development units = 1/2 semester hour of credit

APPENDIX C

Guidelines for Equivalent Credit for Administrators

Human Resource Indicator 6.1 on page 7 of the Accreditation Standards 2005 states, "In fulfillment of this standard, the school employs an administrative head and administrative or supervisory assistants who have an earned graduate degree with 18 semester hours in administration or supervision (as a part of, or in addition to the degree) from an institution recognized by a U.S. regional accrediting agency."

In considering such a request, the State Council may apply the following guidelines:

Activity	Description	Equivalent Credit
Relevant Experience	Successful full-time experience that was acquired at the level of and within the area of the educator's present area of assignment.	1 year of full-time experience = 3 semester hours of credit
Relevant* Coursework	Courses completed in a college or university for which semester hours of credit were awarded and the content of which was relevant to the educator's present area of assignment. A course description or syllabus should be provided to support the consideration of the request.	Actual hours awarded
Relevant In-service	Workshops, seminars, or other training in which the educator has participated within the last five years, provided the training was (1) conducted by a qualified trainer under aegis of an agency other than the school with which the educator is affiliated; (2) focused on knowledge and skills related to the educator's present area of assignment.	10 clock hours of staff development units = 1/2 semester hour of credit

*Educator must possess a graduate degree in some field to be eligible for consideration under these guidelines

APPENDIX D

Guidelines for Earning Equivalent Credit for Professional Growth

Human Resource Indicator 6.6 on page 8 of the Accreditation Standards 2005 states, "In fulfillment of this standard, the school requires all professional personnel to earn at least six semester hours of credit or the equivalent during each five years' of employment."

Six semester hours of credit is equivalent to 120 clock hours of professional development activities such as workshops, seminars, conferences, serving on peer review teams, and other training activities.

If professional personnel elect to earn any of these hours through equivalent activities, the following guidelines apply:

Activity	Description	Equivalent Credit
In-service	Workshops, seminars, and meetings that are sponsored by the school or school system. Such activities must have a clearly defined purpose and are designed to improve the professional competency of the participants.	10 clock hours of staff development units = 1/2 semester hour of credit
Meetings or Conventions	Professional meetings or conventions that are sponsored by a collegiate institution, an educational system, or a professional association and covers topics of professional interest relevant to an individual's responsibilities for the school.	12 clock hours = 1/2 semester hour of credit
Travel	Travel shall involve professional experiences designed to increase the competence or expertise of the staff member in their field of work. A diary of the trip must be prepared by the staff member and filed with their personnel record.	8 to 14 day diary = 1/2 semester hour of credit
Presentations or Publications	Publications on educational topics or papers presented at professional seminars.	2,000 word publication or 25 minute presentation = 1/2 semester hour of credit
Self Study or Peer Review Team	Participation in a self-study or serving on a peer review team for the purpose of accreditation.	Participation = 1 semester hour of credit

Each school or school system is responsible for approving, monitoring, and maintaining appropriate records that reflect each professional staff member's activities related to the fulfillment of the standard for accreditation requirement.

APPENDIX E

Glossary of Terms

Assessment system: A plan or program that enables the school to determine to what degree it is improving student achievement and to identify strengths and weaknesses in the school's instructional practices and organizational conditions.

Beliefs: A list of shared beliefs that, when combined with the mission statement, provides the foundation for the school's policies, procedures, and decisions that supports the goals for student learning.

Challenged materials: Books, periodicals, paintings or other materials that are assigned to students by teachers or that are available in the school (usually the library) that parents or other members of the school community object to for moral, ethical or other reasons.

Community service or outreach activities: Activities outside the school that help students to develop an appreciation for the importance of contributing to the betterment of one's community or to acquire a deeper understanding of topics studied in the classroom.

Curriculum: The learning experiences planned and directed by the school to attain its educational goals, or the scope and sequence of courses offered in a school's program.

Curriculum guides: Written guides or materials, e.g., course syllabi, unit plans, demonstration materials and textbooks, developed by practitioners or scholars to help ensure that the content, skills and understandings of a particular course are taught.

Expectations for student learning: The knowledge, skills and understandings teachers expect students to have when they complete a teaching unit, subject or program. Expectations for student learning are sometimes called exit outcomes, achievement targets, goals for student learning or desired results for student learning.

Instructional and organizational effectiveness: The effectiveness of the instructional practices of the school, e.g., curriculum, instructional strategies, and assessment of student learning, and the effectiveness of its organizational system, e.g., mission, goals, leadership and community building, in supporting the students' achievement of the goals for student learning.

Mission statement: A clear and succinct statement collaboratively developed and adopted by the school community, that describes the compelling purpose of the school.

Professional education: That part of teacher's academic preparation, exclusive of the teaching specialty and liberal studies component that is designed to provide the knowledge, skills and attitudes essential for effective teaching. Professional education typically includes courses or study in areas such as educational psychology, child and adolescent development, principles and methods of teaching, and social/philosophical foundations of education, with a culminating experience in supervised student teaching.

Paraprofessional: A teacher assistant who has been trained to perform certain functions but is not certified or licensed to practice as a professional.

Professional (or staff) development: Learning activities that are designed to help practicing or in-service educators enhance their professional knowledge, skills and effectiveness.

Professionally qualified: Possession of the knowledge and skills that both the trainers and practitioners of a profession, trade or craft, believe are necessary to perform effectively the functions of the position.

Recognized accounting system: A system that adheres to the principles or practice of recording, presenting, and interpreting financial accounts in a manner acceptable to auditors and members of the accounting profession.

School community: Those persons with a vested interest in the beliefs, mission, and quality of the school, e.g., students, teachers, administrators and other staff members, parents, board members and other local officials.

School profile: A comprehensive description of the school that includes information about the current levels of student achievement; student, teacher and community characteristics; the opinions of those persons with a vested interest in the quality of the school, e.g., parents, teachers, students and community leaders; and other factors pertinent to the development of a school improvement plan.

U.S. regional accrediting agency: Any of the six regional accrediting agencies in the United States that promote school improvement through accreditation in the U.S. and other countries, namely, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools; Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools; New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Inc.; North Central Association of Colleges and Schools; Northwest Association of Accredited Schools; and Western Association of Colleges and Schools, Inc.

APPENDIX F

CHECKLIST FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS EDUCATIONAL DELIVERY INDICATORS FOR PROGRAM OF LEARNING

Curriculum Goals

- a. Experiences are provided that meet children's needs and stimulates learning in all developmental areas – physical, social, emotional, and intellectual.
- b. Each child is viewed as a unique person with an individual pattern and timing of growth and development.
- c. The curriculum and interaction of adults reflect individual differences in ability and interests.
- d. Different levels of ability, development, and learning styles are expected, accepted, and used to design appropriate activities.
- e. Interactions and activities are designed to develop children's self-esteem and positive feelings toward learning.

Teaching Strategies

- a. Teachers prepare the environment for children to learn through active exploration and interaction with adults, other children, and materials.
- b. Children select many of their own activities from among a variety of learning areas the teacher prepared, including dramatic play, blocks, science, math, games and puzzles, books, recordings, art, and music.
- c. Teachers provide children uninterrupted time to persist at self-selected tasks and activities.
- d. Teachers recognize that children learn from self-directed problem solving and experimentation and accept that there is often more than one right answer.
- e. Children are expected to be physically and mentally active. Children shall choose from among activities the teacher has organized or the children have spontaneously initiated.
- f. Children work individually or in small, informal groups most of the time.
- g. Teachers provide children concrete learning activities with materials and people relevant to their own life experience.
- h. Teachers move among groups and individuals to facilitate children's involvement with material and activities by asking questions, offering suggestions, or adding more complex materials or ideas to an activity.
- i. Teachers provide accommodations for children with special needs.
- j. Teachers use the natural curiosity and desire of children to make sense of their world in order to motivate them to become involved in their learning activities.

Guidance of Social-Emotional Development

- a. Teachers facilitate the development of self-control in children by using positive guidance techniques such as modeling and encouraging expected behavior, redirecting children to a more acceptable behavior and setting clear limits.
- b. Teachers' expectations match and respect children's developing capabilities.
- c. Teachers recognize that students may revert to toddler behavior when they are upset or feeling shy, especially in a new situation (e.g., thumb sucking, crying, hitting, baby talk, especially 3-year-olds).
- d. Teachers provide opportunities for students to practice self-help skills.
- e. Teachers guide students to do restful activities periodically throughout the day, recognizing that younger students may exhaust themselves.

- f. Teachers provide opportunities for young children to play alone, next to another child, or in small groups.
- g. Teachers support young children's beginning friendships by encouraging children to take turns and share, but do not always expect children to give up favored items, especially 3-year-olds.
- h. Teachers provide children opportunities to develop social skills such as cooperating, helping, negotiating, and talking with the person involved to solve interpersonal problems.
- i. Teachers facilitate the development of positive social skills at all times.
- j. Teachers consistently provide support and reassurance.
- k. Teachers support play activities which foster independence, helping when needed, but allowing students to do what they are capable of doing and what they want to do for themselves.

Language Development and Literacy

- a. Teachers provide many opportunities for children to see how reading and writing are useful before they are instructed in letter names, sounds, and word identification.
- b. Teachers encourage young children's language development by speaking clearly and frequently to individual children and listening to and recognizing their responses.
- c. Teachers provide children an abundance of activities to develop language and literacy through meaningful experience: listening to and reading stories and poems; dictating stories; seeing classroom charts and other print in use; participating in dramatic play and experiences requiring communication; talking informally with other children and adults; and experimenting with writing by drawing, copying, and inventing their own spelling.

Cognitive Development

- a. Children develop understanding of concepts about themselves, others, and the world around them through observation, interacting with people and real objects and seeking solutions to concrete problems.
- b. Learning about math, science, social studies, health, and other content areas shall be integrated through meaningful activities such as those when children build with blocks; measure sand, water, or ingredients for cooking; observe changes in the environment; work with wood and tools; sort objects for a purpose; explore animals, plants, water, wheels, and gears; sing and listen to music from various cultures; and draw, paint, and work with clay.
- c. Routines are followed that help children keep themselves healthy and safe.

Physical Development

- a. Teachers provide children daily opportunities to use large muscles by running, jumping, and balancing.
- b. Outdoor activities are planned so children can develop large-muscle skills, learn about outdoor environments, and express themselves freely and loudly.
- c. Children have daily opportunities to develop small-muscle skills through play activities such as pegboards, puzzles, painting, cutting, and other similar activities.

Aesthetic Development

- a. Children have daily opportunities for aesthetic expression and appreciation through art and music.
- b. Children are encouraged to experiment and enjoy various forms of music.
- c. Children have a variety of art media available for creative expression, such as easel and finger painting, and clay.

Family Involvement

- a. Teachers work in partnership with parents, communicating regularly to build mutual understanding and greater consistency for children.
- b. Programs provide for active family involvement.
- c. Programs provide for parent education and training.
- d. Program staff assist parents in coordinating interagency services for children and families.

Assessment of Children

- a. Children are assessed for the purpose of planning appropriate activities and evaluating the progress of students to meet identified needs.
- b. Children are assessed based on a program that includes developmentally appropriate methods such as continuing observation, recording, and evaluation of each child's growth and development; that includes information from parents; and, that considers the special needs of the student.
- c. Parents are informed on a regular basis concerning the progress of their children.

Program Entry

The school and/or school system provide for the developmental needs and levels of the children it serves.

Facility Health and Safety

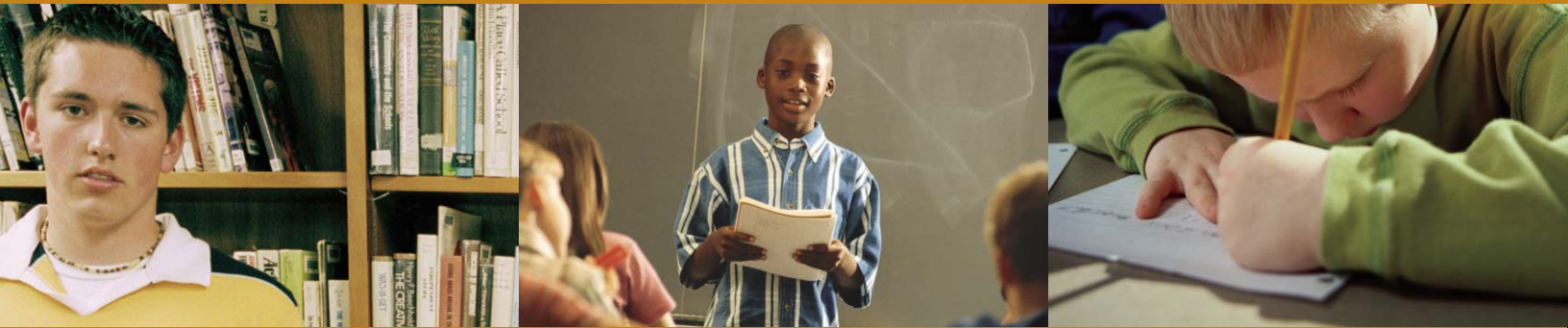
- a. The facility is cleaned regularly (e.g., daily: bathroom fixtures disinfected, trash removed, mouth toys washed; minimum twice a week: infants' equipment washed and disinfected; soiled diapers are disposed of or held for laundry in closed containers inaccessible to children; and changing table cover is disinfected or disposed of after each change of a soiled diaper.
- b. Individual bedding is washed once a week and used by only one child between washings. Individual cribs, cots, or mats are washed if soiled.
- c. Sides of infants' cribs are in a locked position when occupied.
- d. Toilets, drinking water and hand washing facilities are easily accessible to children.
 - Soap and disposable towels are provided.
 - Children wash hands after toileting and before and after meals.
 - Children are educated by staff members concerning hand-washing procedures, use of running water, soap, rubbing, and single use of disposable towels.
 - Hot water temperature does not exceed 110 degrees at outlets used by children.
- e. Stairways are well lighted and equipped with handrails

- f. Electrical outlets are covered with protective caps.
- g. Floor coverings are attached to the floor or backed with non-slip materials.
- h. Nontoxic building materials are used (or lead abatement procedures are in place for older facilities).
- i. All pieces of playground equipment are surrounded by a resilient surface of an acceptable depth or by rubber mats manufactured for such use, consistent with the guidelines of the Consumer Product Safety Commission and the standards of the American Society for Testing and Materials, extending beyond the external limits of the piece of equipment for at least four feet beyond the fall zone.
 - All play equipment is constructed and installed in such a manner as to be safe for use by children.
 - There are no pinch, crush, or shear points on or under the equipment.
 - Climbing equipment, swings, and large pieces of furniture are securely anchored.
- j. All chemicals and potentially dangerous products such as medicines or cleaning supplies are stored in original, labeled containers inaccessible to children. Medication is administered to children only when a parent has submitted a written order, and a designated staff member consistently administers the medication.
- k. All staff and volunteers are familiar with primary and secondary evacuation routes and practice evacuation procedures monthly with children.
 - Written emergency evacuation procedures are posted in conspicuous places.
 - Staff and volunteers are familiar with emergency procedures and procedures for severe storm warnings.
 - Smoke detectors and fire extinguishers are provided and periodically checked.
 - Emergency telephone numbers are posted by telephones



SACSCASI

Southern Association of Colleges and Schools



**Southern Association of Colleges and Schools
Council on Accreditation and School Improvement**
1866 Southern Lane • Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097
404.679.4500 • 800.248.7701 • Fax 404.679.4541
www.sacscasi.org