PREFACE

The purpose of this manual is to assist Visiting Committees (VC) with their duties and responsibilities during a WCEA accreditation visit. Included in this manual are sections specifically for Chairs and for School Leadership Teams/Principals of schools being visited.

This manual is an accompaniment to the ISL 2012 Visiting Committee Training PowerPoint presentation and is a supplement, not a replacement, to that presentation. Some of the material found in this manual is taken directly from the ISL 2012 protocol. This manual is written with the assumption that the Visiting Committee member reading it has already attended training.

PURPOSE OF ACCREDITATION

“Mirror, mirror on the wall…” Have you ever thought about mirrors? Why do we have them? Why are they found in every bathroom, bedroom, and many halls in our home? They are there so that we can assess our appearance before venturing forth into the world of work, school, and play. WCEA accreditation serves as a ‘mirror’ to the school, helping the school assess itself as it moves forward in the world of education. What makes this school Catholic? How, and what are students learning? Is faith formation and student learning the focus of the entire school community? These are the mirror reflections that we call accreditation.

Although a mirror can provide a good self-assessment of our appearance, a more powerful assessment is provided by outsiders – friends, relatives, co-workers – and their positive comments about our appearance (nice hair, sharp suit, etc.). Our WCEA self-assessment is also more powerful when we open our school to outsiders who can provide us with external validation of the success of our endeavors.

The purpose of school accreditation, therefore, is to provide a school with a periodic opportunity to examine and assess the ways in which students are learning, and the school’s involvement in this learning process. It gives the school an opportunity to review its practices and procedures and determine which have the greatest positive impact on student learning, and which practices could be improved to have a greater impact on student learning. Underlying this review of practices and procedures is the concept of gathering and analyzing data to determine what practices and procedures affect student learning.
MISSION OF THE VISITING COMMITTEE

1. **Verify** the reality of the school in relation to the school’s Self Study.
2. **Affirm** school’s significant accomplishments and goals to improve student learning.
3. **Support** (and possibly offer suggestions) the school’s plan to address their critical goals.
4. **Recommend** an Accreditation Status that will assist the school in its growth process.

PREPARATION FOR THE VISIT

A school accreditation visit happens over three days, with a pre-visit usually held about a month before the actual accreditation visit. In some locations, because of travel concerns, the pre-visit may take place the day before the actual accreditation visit. All Visiting Committee members must receive training from the WCEA Elementary Commissioner.

**Visiting Committee Training:** In some Arch/dioceses, all Visiting Committee (VC) members are trained at a central location at the same time. In other dioceses, the VC is trained on the day of the pre-visit at the school site. Consult the local WCEA Elementary Commissioner for information about the time and location of training. Note: because the Chair has to be from outside the diocese (or from a different region within the Archdiocese of Los Angeles), Chairs don’t always attend the local VC training. This is a normal procedure.

**Pre-Visit:** About one month before the actual visit, the VC gathers to meet the Chair, receive a copy of the school’s Self Study, learn from the Chair what the Chair expects and how the VC should respond to the Self Study, tour the school, and meet the teachers and staff. Each member of the VC is responsible for reading the entire Self Study. The Chair assigns writing responsibilities for each VC member. Some Chairs ask each VC member to comment on every section (there are 14 sections) in the Self Study. Other Chairs assign each VC member with a primary writing responsibility for one or more sections of the Self Study; and secondary writing responsibilities for one or more sections. Most Chairs reserve certain sections for their own writing.

**The Self Study Document:** Each VC member receives a copy of the school’s Self Study. This becomes the property of the VC member and the VC member should feel free to highlight portions, write notes in the margin, write questions that need to be resolved during the visit, etc. VC members should consider this a working textbook – just like in college.

The Self Study provides the basis for the pre-writing done by every VC member according to the directions of the Chair. Ideally, most of the time during the visit is spent viewing evidence of student learning and validating the information found in the Self Study with only a little time spent revising the VC’s Report of Findings.
Pre-writing the Report of Findings: The Chair will give specific directions as to how he/she wants the VC to pre-write. Generally speaking, the pre-writing is done electronically. The Chair is responsible for assembling all sections assigned to different VC members into a unified whole. In pre-writing their report, the VC members should always follow certain guidelines:

1. The VC writer must be familiar with both the Accreditation Factor and the Rubrics for each of the four ratings (Highly Effective, Effective, Somewhat Effective, Ineffective) – found in ISL 2012, Appendix K.

2. The writing must reflect the writer’s understanding of how effectively the school has met the Accreditation Factor. If the writer feels that the school is highly effective in meeting the Accreditation Factor, then the language in the narrative must support this. Writers should use language that reflects the Rubrics and identifies the degree to which each part of the Rubric is being met. For example, the Highly Effective Rubric for Accreditation Factor #1 is “All school instructional staff and other shareholders are appropriately involved in every aspect of data review, analysis, and dialogue regarding perceived significant accomplishments and goals...” The VC member writing the narrative for Chapter 1-B who feels that the school is Highly Effective should include positive comments about the involvement of all shareholders (staff, parents, students, alumni, others) in data review (what data was reviewed by the shareholders), data analysis (how did shareholders other than staff participate in data analysis), and shareholder involvement in identifying significant accomplishments and goals. Some sample narratives are included in the appendix to this manual.

THE ACCREDITATION VISIT – 3 DAYS

Accreditation Visit – Day One:
The VC gathers before the start of school to pray together, get direction from the Chair, and possibly meet with the School Leadership Team to ask any questions that arose in the VC’s review of the school’s Self Study. The VC will then observe the start of school (drop off procedures reflect school safety – Chapter 3-G), perhaps a morning assembly, and spend the majority of the day visiting classrooms seeking evidence of student learning. Evidence may be found in the classroom on bulletin boards, student portfolios, etc. There may be an opportunity during the day to meet with the pastor(s) and/or student council/representative groups of students to discuss their involvement and discoveries. The school will provide lunch and dinner for the Visiting Committee members.

Note: Ideally, every VC member will visit every teacher. If possible, every VC member will be present for every subject taught. The size of the school and the size of the VC may make this an impossible goal. VC members should be especially sensitive to visiting special classes that may not be held every day (like PE, art, music, etc.), and speaking with staff members who are not teachers (aides, maintenance, secretarial staff, bookkeeper, etc.) about the accreditation. Non-teaching staff may have great insights into the climate and culture of the school.
After school, the VC will meet with the school staff (without the school’s Leadership Team) to discuss their involvement in the self-study process, any discoveries they found about the school, and their understanding of the accreditation process. Some sample questions can be found in the appendix. Later, the VC will meet with a representative group of parents asking basically the same questions.

Note: Some Chairs like to have parents participate in a ‘fishbowl’ exercise to talk about the school, other Chairs like the VC to interact with the entire group of parents, still other Chairs prefer each VC member to meet with a small number of parents. Your Chair will give you direction on meeting expectations with parents.

Accreditation Visit – Day Two:
The morning schedule is essentially a repeat of the first day and the primary focus is again on visiting classrooms and looking for evidence of student learning. It is especially important to insure that every teacher gets visited, hopefully by every VC member.

Following lunch, the Chair will gather the VC and begin editing the Report of Findings. If the VC members have paid attention to their work in creating a draft Report, and if there are no surprises during the visit, this work is mostly adding evidence and editing the language of the Report. Remember the directions given in the pre-writing (#2). The narrative must reflect the Visiting Committee’s understanding of how effectively the school has met the Accreditation Factor according to the Rubrics. Some VCs, as part of this final writing/editing, highlight specific sentences that can be copied into the Justification Statement and support the rating given to the school on this Accreditation Factor.

Accreditation Visit – Day Three:
The morning of the third day of the Accreditation Visit is dedicated to finishing the Report of Findings. Once the VC has completed the draft of the Report, the VC will meet with the school’s Leadership Team to review this draft. Some Chairs like to read the entire Report to the Leadership Team, other Chairs give the Report, with some brief verbal comments, to the Leadership Team and let them review it on their own. Either way, after the presentation of the draft to the school’s Leadership Team, the Leadership Team retires to another location to read and review the Report. The WCEA Elementary Commissioner is often present at this meeting. After the draft Report of Findings has been reviewed and discussed with the VC, all draft copies of the Report are collected and destroyed/shredded so that only the final copy will be in circulation.

The afternoon of the third day is focused on three important documents: finalizing the Report of Findings, completing the Justification Statement, and making a recommendation for an Accreditation Status.

NOTE: Templates for the Report of Findings, Justification Statement, and Recommendation for Accreditation Status contain text in blue and/or red. ALL COLORED TEXT SHOULD BE DELETED BEFORE PRINTING THE FINAL COPY OF THE DOCUMENT! The colored text (writing points, etc.) is meant to guide the VC writing, not to be a part of the final, document.
1. The school’s Leadership Team has had an opportunity to read the draft *Report of Findings*, and will meet with the VC to respond to this draft. They may find grammatical, punctuation, and/or spelling errors, they may ask the VC to use a different phrase (perhaps HSA instead of PTA), or make changes to the content of the narrative. The VC should keep track of the changes requested by the Leadership Team. The VC will probably want to implement language and phrase changes, but needs to carefully consider content changes. Just because the Leadership Team asked the VC to remove “instruction is not based on curriculum standards” from the narrative doesn’t mean that the VC has to do it – especially if the VC has found no evidence of instruction based on standards. The VC should remember that this is their report and the content should reflect their findings. During the afternoon, the VC is expected to finalize the *Report of Findings*, and print and sign copies for the school and WCEA Elementary Commissioner.

2. The VC completes the *Justification Statement* by rating (Highly Effective, Effective, Somewhat Effective, Ineffective) each of the 12 Accreditation Factors and completing a brief rationale for giving the school the rating. Most VCs copy text out of the *Report of Findings* and place it into the rationale. Remember that the language in the rationale must support the rating and the rating must be aligned with the narrative in the *Report of Findings*. The *Justification Statement* may be shared with the school, thus the alignment of these two documents is critical. If phrases such as “The school is highly effective in disaggregating data, analyzing data, and implementing curricular changes based on data” is used in the *Report of Findings* narrative, then the VC should give the comparable rating (Highly Effective) in the *Justification Statement*. There are instances when a school is highly effective in accomplishing part of the Accreditation Factor, but less effective in accomplishing other parts. For example, the teachers at a school may be highly effective at using assessment to modify instruction to meet the needs of students, but much less effective at using technology in the instructional process (Accreditation Factor #8, Section 3 F in the *Report of Findings*). In this case, the VC may not wish to use rating terminology in the *Report*, or may wish to incorporate multiple ratings in the narrative; e.g., “The teachers are highly effective in using data to drive instruction. However, although the VC saw Smart Boards and other instructional technology in the classroom, the VC did not witness teacher use of this technology, and considers this to be ineffective”. The overall rating in the *Justification Statement* would reflect an overall assessment of all parts of this accreditation factor, and the narrative would support this rating.

3. The final work of the VC is to complete the *Recommendation for Accreditation Status* form. WCEA guidelines are built into the form, so it should be fairly easy to determine an Accreditation Status. There is some flexibility, however, and the VC may need to have a very specific reason for giving the school “Accredited with Provisions” or “Conditional Accreditation”. No matter which Accreditation Status is recommended by the VC, the VC must complete a narrative that explains the reason for recommending a specific status. “The majority voted for it” is not an acceptable rationale!
4. By the end of the third day, all three documents (*Report of Findings, Justification Statement, Recommendation for Accreditation Status*) must be completed, printed, and signed by all VC members. Hard copies and electronic copies (Word format – not pdf) must be provided to the WCEA Elementary Commissioner, and a hard copy of the *Report of Findings* provided to the school. Most Chairs send an electronic copy (pdf this time) to the school so that they can post it online or e-mail it to their shareholders. A final, summary report is made by the Visiting Committee to the entire faculty/staff of the school.
VISITING COMMITTEE MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. Attend the Visiting Committee training. Your local WCEA Elementary Commissioner will notify you of the time and location of the training.
2. Sign a confidentiality statement either at this meeting or at the pre-visit as determined by Arch/diocesan procedures.
3. Attend the pre-visit and receive your copy of the school’s Self Study.
4. Read the Self Study in its entirety. Highlight, take notes, write in the margins, list questions for which answers are needed; and understand the document.
5. Pre-write according to directions given by the Chair. For some VC members, this may mean writing a sentence or two (or even a whole paragraph) on each of the 14 sections. For other VC members this may mean having the primary responsibility to write a brief narrative for one or more sections, and contribute to a narrative for some other sections. The Chair will give you specific directions on pre-writing the Report of Findings.
6. Get all pre-writing materials to the Chair in a timely manner according to the timeline established by the Chair.
7. Be present for all 3 days of the visit, and any evening meetings required by the Chair.
8. Participate in all meetings of the VC.
9. Visit as many classrooms as possible. View evidence of student learning. Talk to students, teachers, staff, parents, alumni, etc. about their involvement in completing the Self Study (validation of Chapter 1-B, Shareholder Involvement) and what they discovered about their school as a result of this process.
10. Participate in all discussions by the Visiting Committee contributing to the Report of Findings, Justification Statement, and Recommendation for Accreditation Status.
11. Collaboratively assist with the wordsmithing, language crafting, grammatical review, etc. as needed. Do not insist that a specific word or phrase be used, but work toward consensus in crafting a narrative that supports and directs the school.
12. Complete the Evaluation of Chair form and return it to the WCEA Elementary Commissioner as directed by the Commissioner.

SPECIAL NOTE ABOUT PRE-VISITS: island schools (Hawai‘i and Guam) and some very rural schools may schedule the pre-visit the day before the actual visit due to transportation time and costs. The school’s Self Study will be provided to the VC members at least a month in advance, and the Chair will communicate his/her expectations for pre-writing at that time. The WCEA Elementary Commissioner will notify VC members if the pre-visit is to take place the day before the accreditation visit, and what VC members must do to prepare for the visit.
VISITING COMMITTEE GUIDELINES FOR CLASSROOM VISITS

Coordinate your visits so no more than two people are in one classroom at a time.

1. Place your lanyard on the door to indicate you are observing.

2. Plan to spend 10-15 minutes in the classroom observing evidence of student learning.

3. Sit in an out of the way spot and do not talk to the teacher unless there is a break in instruction.

4. Are all the students working?

5. Is the lesson differentiated for different learning styles?

6. Are Schoolwide Learning Expectations visible and applicable to the lesson?

7. Is student work on display?

8. Are the lesson objectives known to the students?

9. Do you see in practice what was discussed in the self-study?

Consider leaving a note for the teacher thanking them for allowing you to visit and compliment them on some aspect of their classroom environment.

Observation: In instructional settings and school-wide …

- To what extent are explicit Catholic values infused into instruction? Are they identified as Catholic values? Are there references to Scripture and/or Church teachings?
- What the students are doing: Receiving information? Applying skills? Practicing newly acquired skills? Synthesizing and evaluating information?
- Are the students task-oriented? Are they engaged in their work?
- What is the range of activities taking place (from acquisition of factual knowledge to the use of higher level thinking skill)?
- How students are applying the skills of reading, writing, speaking, composing and thinking?
- How the students are challenged to think and to communicate their thoughts orally and in writing?
- How students with special needs are participating in the classroom activities?
- How the instructional settings are varied according to the needs of the students and/or what is to be learned?
- What is the extent to which the school values learning?
- How students are supported, recognized and rewarded?
- The interactions among and between staff, students and parents?
CHAIR SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES

Communication is important throughout the whole process!

- **Communicate** with the Commissioner. Build a relationship to avoid misunderstandings. Find out what the Commissioner expects, any idiosyncrasies, nuances, or personalization that the Chair should make for the Arch/Diocese. This may include processes for partner agencies, partner agency representatives, unique quality or arrangements made for the school through MOUs, a specific preference the Commissioner might have for how to handle readings, submission of files, etc.

- Chair needs to understand the **timeline** for the whole process: from the time the chair is assigned and dates have been finalized.

- Chair should send Commissioner copies of **initial correspondence** with school and VC members, or if any changes are made to the pre-visit or first reading schedule.

- Identify expectations regarding consultation with Commissioner regarding unusual school requests, or issues with school leadership team members.

- **Clarify** the Commissioner’s role in the process and/or in overriding VC findings.

- Chairs must **notify commissioner** as early as possible in the visit if there are concerns or challenges to the school’s action plan.

- Chair should **always be available** to the principal and leadership team.

- Chair should always bring concerns to the principal as soon as possible so that there are **no surprises** on the last day.

Before the Pre-visit:

- **Schedule** a pre-pre-visit with the principal *(optional - if this takes place, it would be before the regularly scheduled pre-visit and give the chair--and only the chair--the opportunity to visit the school and get a feel for the educational community. This could also take place over the phone.)*

- **Schedule** a pre-visit: WCEA Elementary Commissioner, school principal, and VC Chair set up a pre-visit date, approximately 4-5 weeks prior to the accreditation visit.
  - However, for some schools the pre-visit is held the day before the accreditation visit *(e.g., Sunday if the visit is on Mon.-Wed.)*. In this case, the pre-visit may be combined with a parent/school board meeting as well.
  - Some schools do not hold pre-visits, making **communication between the chair and the principal essential**.

- Chair should **communicate** to the principal and Commissioner whether and when he/she wants to view the self-study before it is published. A draft that the commissioner has previously reviewed is preferable. The Chair should ask to see this draft at least a month before the pre-visit.

- **Give feedback** to the leadership team about the action plan before the pre-visit so that they can address areas of concern before the pre-visit. **Commissioners** should train chairs to look at Action Plans ahead of time before the pre-visit/final copy so that revisions can be made in a timely manner.

- Chair should **communicate** to the principal what evidence he/she wants to see during the pre-visit and visit itself. This should alleviate unnecessary work for teachers and school staff.

- Chair **plans pre-visit meeting in collaboration** with the principal for VC members. Send out an agenda to the VC for the pre-visit meeting.
Pre-visit:

- Chair should have a **packet** for each VC member, including prayer, contact information, and a draft schedule of the full visit.
- Promote **collaboration** for the VC. This means giving real responsibility to committee members.
- **Clearly communicate expectations** of ‘homework’ to VC.
- **Have a sample template** available for pre-writing.
- Chair should **pay close attention** to the action plan, goals, and timelines in order to communicate to the committee any problems or areas where evidence is needed.
- The **most important** things for the **Chair** to read before the visit are Chapter 2 (to understand the school context) and Chapter 4 (how well the plan is put together).
- **Assign writing sections** to the Visiting Committee members for pre-writing. Some Chairs assign sections, some assign everything. This is an individual Chair’s choice.
- **Assign a process for collecting** the pre-writing. Some Chairs use a Writeboard (http://123.writeboard.com/new), others Google Docs, others e-mail Word docs, etc. This is up to the Chair. The Chair must set a deadline for all pre-writing to be completed and made available to the Chair.
- **Example** for sharing homework: Develop a “Reading notes” google doc so that each VC member can give comments on the other sections (not their own). This way, you can hold each VC member accountable for reading and contributing. For instance, it would look like this:
  - Ch3, D. Data (assigned to VC Member #1)
    - Chair’s comments & questions: (insert here)
    - VC member #2’s comments & questions: (insert here)
    - VC Member #3’s comments & questions: (insert here)
    - repeat for each section
- It is beneficial to the VC if the **draft** of the Report of Findings is available for the VC’s review a day or two ahead of the actual visit, especially if Writeboard or Google docs are not used.
- **Chair plans** the visit schedule in consultation with the principal. **Chair communicates** the schedule with the VC at the pre-visit.

Three-Day Visit:

- **Chair facilitates** the meetings with the School Leadership Team. Be sure to begin each meeting with prayer.
- **Encourage all VC members** to visit every classroom, and as many subjects as possible. Use a chart listing teachers on one axis and classes on the other and have VC members initial the chart whenever they visit a classroom. This is an easy, visual way of seeing any teachers/classes that have not been visited.
- **Meetings with various groups** (pastor/clergy, student council/student reps, parents, school staff) are held throughout the accreditation visit.
  - Meetings should begin with a brief prayer. Chairs should provide some samples for VC members.
  - Not every VC member needs to go to every meeting. The chair doesn’t need to “lead” every meeting. We need to train **future chairs**!
o Some Chairs like the VC to eat lunch with the student representatives, others prefer to have a more formal meeting.

o Some Chairs have a dinner with parents, and assign a VC member to each table of parents, other Chairs use a group meeting, and still others use a ‘fishbowl’ technique for gaining parental input. The parent meeting may be held in the evening, or, in the case of some commuter schools, immediately after school.

o Chairs should work collaboratively with the School Leadership Team to schedule the time and location of the meetings according to the conditions of the educational community.

VC REPORTS:

Report of Findings:
- Assemble a draft of the Report of Findings prior to the school accreditation visit.
- Finish the Report of Findings during the visit.
- Chairs must notify commissioner as early as possible in the visit if there are concerns or challenges to the school’s action plan.
- The process should not be rushed. A chair needs to make travel arrangements late enough to provide diligent service to the school. The school may need to accommodate another overnight stay for the chair.
- Day three meet with leadership team in the morning to review the Report of Findings draft. If they make recommendations to edit the document, then the chair goes back to VC to discuss possible changes for input.
- If it appears that the VC is going to use Option A or Option B of the Report of Findings, the Chair must be in dialogue with the School Leadership Team about the reason for using the Option(s). There should be no surprises when the VC and School Leadership Team meet to discuss the draft Report of Findings.
- When presenting the Report of Findings, each accreditation factor should be addressed.
- A PowerPoint could be used to present each accreditation factor; whether or not “Highly Effective, Effective, etc.” are used is up to the chair. Use pictures of the school campus/community if possible (ensuring that all permissions have been granted).
- If possible, the chair should encourage VC members to each present an accreditation factor(s) they worked on.
- At minimum, the chair and VC present concrete feedback on each accreditation factor. It is not advisable to simply congratulate the school faculty and staff on the work they did and give accolades to the school without concrete feedback. The school worked very hard and deserves at least that much from the VC.

Justification Statement:
- Chair, in collaboration with VC, completes the Justification Statement.
- The chair, with input from the VC, ensures that the language of the Report of Findings matches the language of the Justification Statement.

Recommendation for Accreditation Status:
- Chair, with input from the VC, completes a Recommendation for Accreditation Status and it is signed by all Committee members.
Final Steps:
- Ensure that the WCEA Elementary Commissioner receives both print and electronic copies (Word format) of the Report of Findings, Justification Statement, and signed Accreditation Status at the end of the visit. Put the scanned documents in the correct order for the Commissioner so that it is ready to go for the May reading meeting: Status, Justification, Report of Findings.
- A hard copy of the report must be left with the school before the VC leaves. If polishing takes place by the Chair, it must be complete within a week of the visit.
- The school receives a pdf copy of the Visiting Committee Report from the chair. See the special note on the previous page about island schools and very rural schools.
- Complete an evaluation of all VC members and give/send to the Commissioner and identify any VC members who could be future chairs.

Templates for the Accreditation Process:
- Sample of pre-writing assignment
- Sample Timeline for VC
- Sample visit schedule
- Webinar or “How-To” regarding: the use of data in accreditation; the use of NWEA MAP, STAR results to inform data analysis for accreditation and continuous improvement
- Sample surveys
- Sample VC reports
- Samples of what constitutes Highly Effective, etc. for every accreditation factor
- Sample structures of VC presentation to the school staff

SCHOOL LEADERSHIP TEAM/PRINCIPAL SPECIFIC DIRECTIONS

Pre-Visit
1. The pre-visit normally occurs four weeks to one month prior to the actual school visit. The pre-visit date is arranged between the chair and principal with communication to the WCEA Elementary Commissioner. The actual visit dates are determined by the principal and the Commissioner.
2. Schedule a meeting room for Visiting Committee meeting.
3. Sample schedule for the pre-visit includes:
   a. (Optional) In some Arch/dioceses, the VC training takes place in the morning and the rest of the pre-visit takes place in the afternoon. Check with the Commissioner for details.
   b. Social gathering for faculty/staff and visiting committee with refreshments
   c. Prayer and introductions
   d. Overview of visitation process
   e. Tour of school facilities for Visiting Committee
   f. Presentation of self-study to Visiting Committee
   g. Orientation of Visiting Committee by Chair
4. For pre-visit have the following materials available for each Visiting Committee member:
   a. Copy of self-study
b. Copy of daily teacher schedules for days of visit and school schedule  
c. Diagram/map of school  
d. Instructions for parking during visit  
e. Name tags  
f. Any additional materials requested by the Chair.  

5. Principal will send/give one hard copy of the self-study to each Visiting Committee member, the Catholic Schools Office, and one electronic copy on CD/flash drive/by e-mail (check with your Commissioner).  

“EVIDENCE”  
(Evidence should be information that parents and students see on a regular basis. This should not be just a “show” for the visiting committee)  

1. Post Learning Expectations and Mission Statement in every classroom, in handbooks, faculty room, hallway(s). Samples of student work that demonstrates assessment of each of the learning expectations (color coding may be helpful).  

2. Student work (all students should have something on display)  
   ✓ Variety of writing samples  
   ✓ Projects, i.e. art, science  
   ✓ Displays  
   ✓ Collaborative activities  
   ✓ Community resources  
   ✓ Taped interviews of students/parents (video/audio)  
   ✓ Technology presentations  
   ✓ Video productions  

3. Minutes of all meetings dealing with school improvement process  
4. Chart paper of brainstorming discussions of learning expectations  
5. Surveys (student, parent, clergy, faculty/staff)  
6. Handbooks (parent, faculty, student, etc)  
7. Faculty bulletins  
8. Catholic identity survey  
9. Letters to parents – especially highlighting the process for schools improvement  

10. Assessment tools  
    ✓ Standardized tests  
    ✓ Teacher made tests  
    ✓ Textbook generated tests  
    ✓ Norm reference tests  
    ✓ Criterion referenced tests  
    ✓ Authentic assessment  
    ✓ Performance assessment  
    ✓ Student assessment  
    ✓ Portfolios  

11. Financial reports (current and previous years)  
    ✓ Annual budget  
    ✓ Long range financial plan  
    ✓ Financial procedures  

12. Copy of Strategic or Long Range Plan  
    ✓ Procedures for review and updating plan  

13. Description of special programs  
    ✓ Art masterpiece  
    ✓ Library  
    ✓ Remedial  
    ✓ Service programs
14. Student Council information
   ✓ Projects
   ✓ Christian service opportunities

15. School Board /Parent organization
   ✓ Constitution and bylaws
   ✓ Minutes
   ✓ Goals
   ✓ Activities
   ✓ Committee reports

16. Publicity
   ✓ School brochures
   ✓ Alumni newsletter
   ✓ Parish Bulletins
   ✓ Newspaper articles

17. Procedures for Faculty/Staff evaluations, professional development, and Diocesan In-service topics

18. Diocesan Handbook of Policies, Procedures and Norms as well as Local School Handbooks

19. School Wide Discipline Plan

20. Extracurricular offerings

21. Celebrations/Recognition of Student Successes

22. Report card samples/Progress reports

23. School schedules – master/daily

24. Curriculum guidelines – Diocesan and local

25. Procedures for curriculum development evaluation and revision

26. Follow-up studies of graduates

27. Curriculum In-depth Studies

28. Any additional materials that support the self-study may be provided in the VC work room.
   (Evidence specific to a grade level should be in the individual classrooms)

**School Accreditation Visit:**

Provide a private conference room for VC members and the following materials:

- ✓ Computers/printers (networked in room if possible)
- ✓ Rubber bands
- ✓ Video projector and screen
- ✓ Stapler/staples
- ✓ Copy machine access
- ✓ Scratch pads
- ✓ Paper – white and colored
- ✓ Erasers
- ✓ Post-it notes
- ✓ Pens/pencils
- ✓ Name tags
- ✓ Scotch tape
- ✓ Dictionary/thesaurus
- ✓ Highlighters
- ✓ Door know name signs
- ✓ Necessary keys
- ✓ Colored markers
- ✓ Chart pad
- ✓ Paper clips
- ✓ Paper shredder access
- ✓ Overhead transparencies
- ✓ Scratch pads
- ✓ Highlighters

Tech person available (many Chairs bring their own laptops but need access to a printer)
“Gopher” person for copying
Hospitality
1. Breakfast for VC members each morning
2. Lunch
3. Snacks
4. Dinner if needed by VC members
Discuss with chairperson reference for gathering for parents, faculty, staff, etc. finger food, light refreshments, dinner, etc. Special dietary needs (discuss with Chair and VC pre-visit)

Additional School Responsibilities
• Chair Transportation – the chair is from outside the diocese (from another region in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles) and the school is responsible for reimbursing the chair for travel to and from the school during both the pre-visit and accreditation visit. For island schools (Hawaii and Guam), and very rural schools, the pre-visit may take place the day before the visit. Check with your Elementary Commissioner if you have any questions about this.
• VC Transportation – the school is also responsible for reimbursing all VC members for mileage/transportation for the pre-visit and accreditation visit.
• Housing – the school is responsible for providing housing for the Chair during the accreditation visit (generally 3 days, but could be more depending on the location of the school and the availability of transportation from outside the Arch/diocese). The school is also responsible for providing housing for any VC members needing housing during the visit.
APPENDICES:

Sample Focus Group Questions (students, parents, staff)  Pages 13-16
Visiting Committee Reminders/Tips for the Visit  Page 17
Report of Findings Template  Pages 18-27
Accreditation Factors and Rubrics  Pages 28-36
Justification Statement  Pages 37-41
Accreditation Status  Pages 42-44
Tips on Content and Writing Style  Page 45
Writing Resources  Pages 46-50

SAMPLE FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS:

You may want to use some of the ISL Discussion Questions and Writing Prompts to gain insights into what the school wrote in the Self Study. The sample questions on the next few pages have check boxes if a Chair would like to assign specific questions to VC members. Space (and lines) have been added for the Chair/VC to write additional questions.
Pastor Conversation vs. Pastor Interview (Catholic Identity)

Please remember that we want to establish a dialogue with the pastor and not make him feel uncomfortable with a question and answer interview piece. Often the pastor may only want to meet with the Visiting Committee Chair. In other schools he may choose to meet with the entire VC or any combination. In addition to the ISL Visiting Committee Discussion Prompts and Writing Questions you could consider the additional questions below. Use your best judgment.

☐ What is the best thing about ____________ School?
☐ How does communication between the school and parish work?
☐ What is the relationship between you and the principal?
☐ How does the school extend the Good News to non-Catholics on staff, among parents, etc?
☐ What role do you have in the periodic review of the religion curriculum for integration into the total school curriculum?
☐ How does the school integrate with the parish to provide for the spiritual formation of students, staff and parents?
☐ How are students, faculty and staff encouraged to participate in service projects based on themes of Social Justice?
☐ What is the greatest need of the school for the future?
☐ Do you have any questions for the Visiting Committee?

☐ ...................................................................................................................

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Be sure and thank the pastor for his time and insight about the school....
**Possible Questions for the Student Meeting**

In addition to the ISL Visiting Committee Discussion Prompts and Writing Questions you could consider the additional questions below. Use your best judgment.

- Describe a day here at this school
- If you were visiting your school for the first time, how would you know it is a Catholic School?
- What is the name of your pastor?
- What prayers can you recite from memory?
- How do you know how you are doing in school? What happens if you are not succeeding?
- What is your favorite part of the school day? The school week? The school year?
- What do you look forward to in ________ (pick a grade)?
- What are the opportunities for leadership at your school?
- Tell us about service projects that happen at your school?
- If you could change one thing at your school, what would it be?
- Do you find it easy to speak to your teachers? Your principal?
- What will be some of the memories you take with you when you graduate?
- If you were selected to speak to a new student about your school, what would you say?
- What are SLE’s?

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Be sure and thank the students for their time and insights about the school....
Meeting with the Faculty and Staff

In addition to the ISL Visiting Committee Discussion Prompts and Writing Questions you could consider the additional questions below. Use your best judgment.

- How do you use the Arch/diocesan curriculum?
- How are the Schoolwide Learning Expectations tied to the curriculum?
- How do you assess the SLEs?
- How do you insure that all students' needs are met? What happens to those that are not succeeding?
- What types of teaching strategies are used in the classroom?
- How are students actively engaged in learning?
- How is technology incorporated into the curriculum?
- How is student achievement measured?
- What data is being collected and analyzed?
- What is the process used to interpret this data and how are these interpretations being communicated to appropriate shareholders?
- How do you use data to inform (modify/change) your instruction?
- What changes have you made in curricula as the result of data analysis?
- What types of co-curricular and extra-curricular activities is available to students?
- What types of professional development are available to teachers?
- What are the best "things" about teaching at this school?
- What did you learn about the educational process at this school during this Self Study?

Be sure and thank the faculty and staff for their time and insights about the school....
Parent Meeting Questions

This meeting is usually held in the evening. Some Chairs like to have dinner with the parents and have each VC member sit at a table with a random group of parents. Other Chairs like to have a fishbowl with all the parents in a circle and the VC outside the circle listening to the parents talk and taking notes. Most Chairs have the parents and VC members sitting in a large circle. To keep everything feeling open and welcoming, it helps to have VC members spread out among the parents, not all sitting together with the Chair. In addition to the ISL Visiting Committee Discussion Prompts and Writing Questions you could consider the additional questions below. Use your best judgment.

- What is the very best thing about the school?
- What do you want us to know about your school?
- How were you involved in the self-study?
- How are you involved in the school?
- Tell me about _____ at the school
- How is the school a ministry of the parish?
- What do you see your role to be?
- What do you really hope will change or happen at ______ School in the coming year?
- Why do you choose to send your children to this school?
- What are your thoughts about the Church’s teaching about parents as the primary educators responsible for the faith formation of their children? How can the school support you with this responsibility?


Be sure and thank the parents for their time and insights about the school....
VISITING COMMITTEE MEMBER – REMINDERS/TIPS FOR THE VISIT

1. Demonstrate through actions a genuine interest in the welfare of the school and a desire to be helpful throughout the visit and the preparation of the Report of Findings.
2. Look at the quality of program experienced by students and evidence of an ongoing process for school improvement.
3. Frame questions to school committees and individuals to elicit information without reflecting a value judgment on the part of the questioner.
4. Concentrate on being a good listener.
5. Assure teachers that classroom visits are not evaluative but are planned to observe the general instructional atmosphere and climate of the school.
6. Lead discussion in meetings with faculty/staff. Allows adequate time for other Visiting Committee members to clarify questions and for the school faculty/staff member to highlight issues important to them. Overall the Visiting Committee member helps everyone, to recognize the needs of the school and develop a desire to improve the instructional program.
7. Utilize any time between assigned tasks to talk individually with staff members and students.
8. Do not allow pressure groups or individuals to distract him/her from the main task and schedule.
9. Make every effort to avoid involvement in issues that are negotiable.
10. Work cooperatively with all Visiting Committee members as the findings are discussed and decisions made.
11. Participate in the determination of a goal for the Action Plan, if necessary.
12. Participate in a meeting with the Leadership Committee to present and thoroughly discuss the draft of the Report of Findings.
13. Meets with other Visiting Committee members to discuss and investigate any issues or questions raised in the dialogue with the Leadership Committee.
15. Participate in the Visiting Committee discussion and recommendation for accreditation status to WCEA.
16. Assist the chair in preparing the confidential justification statement, ensuring alignment between that statement and the recommendation for accreditation status.
17. Complete expense voucher (optional) and evaluation of chair form.
18. Participate in the presentation of the final report to the entire staff. Supports/encourages the school in its ongoing follow-up.
19. Do not imply to school the recommendation for accreditation status.
REPORT OF FINDINGS

[SCHOOL CODE AND NAME]
[STREET ADDRESS]
[CITY, STATE ZIP]
(ARCH)DIOCESE OF [ ]

AND

PARTNERING ACCREDITING AGENCY

IMPROVING STUDENT LEARNING 2012

A SELF STUDY PROCESS
FOR CATHOLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

[DATES OF ACCREDITATION VISIT]
# REPORT OF FINDINGS

for

[School Code and Name]

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Signed hard copy **as well as** electronic copy (Word format only – **not** pdf) is to be given to the Elementary Commissioner following the Accreditation Visit.

**Special note on using this template:** Highlight sections in **red**, change the font color to black, and enter text. Be sure to include language that can be transferred to the Justification Statement and is found in the Self Study, evidence, or during the Visit. Delete this box before printing. The **BLUE** sections serve to guide the Visiting Committee narrative and should be deleted after the narrative has been written and all Visiting Committee members agree to the narrative.
PREFACE [Visiting Committee Chair – modify as needed/desired]

We, the Visiting Committee, wish to commend you, the pastor, administration, faculty, staff, parents, and student body of [School] for working together to make the school a loving, caring and learning environment. We pray that the good work that you have done and the plans that you have made for the future will help you become an even better school.

The team found our three days at [School] professionally rich and personally rewarding. We experienced a community where everyone is striving to provide a Catholic environment where quality education is a priority.

We wish to thank all of you, pastor, principal, faculty, staff, parents and students for your warm and gracious hospitality.

May the Christ we serve bless you with every success as you journey into your future.

Chapter 1: Introduction [OPTIONAL CHANGE]

A. How the Self Study was Conducted

Incorporate the following points in the Visiting Committee narrative describing how the Self Study was conducted:

- The process the school used to complete the Self Study (schedule of leadership team meetings, timeline, involvement of parents serving on committees, role of school board, frequency of Self Study Committee meetings);
- Any obstacles, the school experienced in completing their Self Study.

The Visiting Committee observed [begin writing here]

B. Involvement and Collaboration of Shareholders in Completing the Self Study

Accreditation Factor #1: The school involves all shareholders in data review, analysis and dialogue about perceived accomplishments in the area of student learning, and in developing, implementing and monitoring goals for improvements in student learning.

Incorporate the following points in the Visiting Committee narrative describing involvement and collaboration of shareholders in completing the Self Study:

- How effectively the school involved all shareholders in: discussions using the discussion questions (all chapters), assessing the spiritual development of students (Chapter 3-A), editing and revising the mission and philosophy (Chapter 3-B), editing/revising SLEs and creating rubrics (Chapter 3-C), assessing student progress toward clearly defined goals (Chapter 3-D), analyzing data that was reviewed, review of significant accomplishments,
creation of goals and strategies, monitoring implementation of the action plan (Chapter 4-A), continuous school improvement;

- How effective the school’s plans are to keep shareholders involved in ongoing systematic analysis of the school’s effectiveness.

The Visiting Committee observed [begin writing here]

Chapter 2: Context of the School

A. School Profile

_Incorporate the following points in the Visiting Committee narrative describing the school profile:

- To what extent the school has compiled and analyzed annually updated data (cultural, demographic, financial, survey, interview), identified major changes or trends since the last Self Study, and projected solutions;
- What parent/student/staff surveys tell about satisfaction with the school.

The Visiting Committee observed [begin writing here]

B. Use of Prior Accreditation Findings to Support High Achievement of All Students

Accreditation Factor #2: The school has used the prior accreditation findings, both those discovered by the school and those identified by the Visiting Committee, and other pertinent data to ensure high achievement of all students and to drive school improvement.

_Incorporate the following points in the Visiting Committee narrative describing how the school used prior accreditation findings to support high achievement of all students:

- Completion of all goals from the previous Action Plan including any revisions mandated by the Visiting Committee (and Revisit Committee if applicable) and any goals added since the last accreditation visit;
- How effectively the school used the prior accreditation findings and other pertinent data to support high achievement of all students;
- How effectively the school monitored its progress on accomplishment of its action plan and communicated this progress to its shareholders;
- How effectively the school implemented the concept of continuous school improvement, e.g., data analysis and action, focus on high achievement, etc. in non-accreditation years?

The Visiting Committee observed [begin writing here]
Chapter 3: Quality of the School Program

A. Assessment of the School’s Catholic Identity

Accreditation Factor #3: The school is Catholic, approved by the Local Ordinary (Canon 803), providing opportunities for community worship and participation in the Sacraments, and promoting evangelization and service to the community.

Incorporate the following points in the Visiting Committee narrative describing how the school assessed its Catholic Identity:

- How effectively the school has assessed its Catholic Identity by improving the spiritual formation of students, staff, and parents; by developing, implementing, and assessing a standards-based Religion curriculum; by providing development opportunities for staff focused on faith development and religious instruction competencies; and by analyzing changes they’ve made in Catholic Identity to determine how these changes have strengthened their Catholic Identity;
- How effectively has the school discovered areas of their Catholic Identity that need to be improved.

The Visiting Committee observed [begin writing here]

B. Defining the School’s Purpose

Accreditation Factor #4: The school’s purpose is defined through the school’s mission statement, philosophy, measurable Schoolwide Learning Expectations, Arch/diocesan curriculum standards (local curriculum standards where Arch/diocesan standards don’t exist), and other governing authority expectations.

Incorporate the following points in the Visiting Committee narrative describing how the school defined its purpose:

- How effectively the school’s mission and philosophy reflect the Catholic Identity/nature of the school;
- How effectively the school uses their SLEs and curriculum standards to define the school’s purpose;
- How effectively the school communicates their mission and purpose, including any governing authority expectations, to their shareholders;
- How effectively the school discovered what improvements are needed to its mission, philosophy, SLEs, standards, and/or governing authority expectations.

The Visiting Committee observed [begin writing here]

C. Organization for Student Learning to Support High Achievement of All Students
Accreditation Factor #5: The organizational structures of the school focus on high achievement of all students, and communicate student progress to all shareholders.

Incorporate the following points in the Visiting Committee narrative describing how the school’s organization for student learning supports high achievement of all students:

- How effectively the organizational structures of the school support and promote the Catholic Identity of the school;
- How effectively the organizational structures create an environment that focuses on student learning;
- How effectively the organizational structures of the school communicate high achievement by all students to the shareholders;
- How effectively the school analyzed how their governance and other structures could be improved to support student learning.

The Visiting Committee observed [begin writing here]

D. Data Analysis and Action to Support High Achievement of All Students

Accreditation Factor #6: The school uses educationally sound assessment processes to collect data. The school disaggregates and analyzes student performance data and uses the analysis as a basis for instructional/curricular improvement.

Incorporate the following points in the Visiting Committee narrative describing how the school uses data analysis to modify the curriculum/instruction/learning:

- How effectively the school used data about faith formation, etc. to strengthen their Catholic Identity;
- How effectively the school used educationally sound assessment processes to collect, disaggregate and analyze student performance data (Note: include information about the use of standardized tests, teacher-made tests, and text-created tests; as well as the school’s use of clear interpretations of the data analysis.);
- How effectively the school used analysis of assessment data to drive curricular change, i.e., to modify teaching/learning, to offer additional academic support to students in the first and fourth quartiles, to help other students who are not at grade level;
- How effectively the school used disaggregation, data analysis, trends, etc. as a basis for improving student learning such as: modifying instruction, challenging students to achieve, implementing new curricular materials, etc.;
- How effectively the school analyzed their use of data to drive curricular improvement.

The Visiting Committee observed [begin writing here]
E. High Achievement By All Students Toward Clearly Defined SLEs and Curriculum Standards

**Accreditation Factor #7:** All students make acceptable and measurable progress toward clearly defined Schoolwide Learning Expectations and challenging, comprehensive, and relevant curriculum standards.

Incorporate the following points in the Visiting Committee narrative describing how the school uses SLEs and standards-based curriculum to support high achievement of all students and ensure acceptable progress by all students:

- How effectively the school has incorporated Catholic values into the curriculum;
- How effectively the school ensured that the curriculum standards are challenging, comprehensive, and relevant for all students;
- How effectively the school measures student achievement of the SLEs and curriculum standards;
- How effectively the school ensured that each student is making acceptable progress toward the achievement of SLEs and curriculum standards;
- How effectively the school has integrated technology into the learning process;
- How effectively the school identified students who are not making acceptable progress, implemented plans to assist these students, evaluated these plans, and modified these plans as necessary to increase acceptable progress by all students;
- How effectively the school assessed their programs used to support disaggregate groups and ensure acceptable progress for all students.

The Visiting Committee observed [begin writing here]

F. Instructional Methodology to Support High Achievement of All Students

**Accreditation Factor #8:** The staff applies research-based knowledge about teaching and learning in the instructional process. Assessment is frequent and varied, integrated into the teaching/learning process, and informs curriculum planning.

Incorporate the following points in the Visiting Committee narrative describing how the school uses instructional methodology to support high achievement of all students:

- How effectively the school staff model Catholic values;
- How effectively the school implemented research-based instructional methodology to enhance student learning.
- How effectively the school used assessment to modify instruction/curriculum to help all students achieve the SLEs and curriculum standards.
- How effectively the school integrated technology into the teaching/learning process.
- How effectively the school identified what improvements are needed in curriculum and instruction to support high achievements of all students.

The Visiting Committee observed [begin writing here]
G. Support for Student Spiritual, Personal, and Academic Growth

**Accreditation Factor #9:** Within the school’s community of faith, students have opportunities to participate in support services and activities to assist them in accessing the curricular and co-curricular programs to achieve the Schoolwide Learning Expectations, Arch/diocesan curriculum standards (local curriculum standards where Arch/diocesan standards don’t exist), and other governing authority expectations.

**Incorporate the following points in the Visiting Committee narrative describing how the school supports student spiritual, personal, and academic growth:**

- How effectively the school support programs, service learning opportunities, etc. are rooted in Catholic values (e.g., are Principles of Social Justice the reason for service learning?);
- How effectively the school provides services, resources, and activities to help all students achieve at high levels in both curricular and non-curricular areas;
- How effectively the school has planned for emergencies;
- How effectively the school used parents, community resources including Federal Program funding, technology, etc. to assist students;
- How effectively the school provides resources and services to help students with special needs including students with greater learning aptitude;
- How effectively the school identified support services that they need to provide to students to support high achievement of all students.

The Visiting Committee observed [begin writing here]

H. Resource Management and Development to Support High Achievement of All Students

**Accreditation Factor #10:** The pastor, principal, and school board develop, implement, and monitor resources and plans to ensure and support high achievement of all students of the Schoolwide Learning Expectations, Arch/diocesan curriculum standards (local curriculum standards where Arch/diocesan standards don’t exist), and other governing authority expectations.

**Incorporate the following points in the Visiting Committee narrative describing how the school uses resource management and development to support high achievement of all students:**

- How effectively the school used its financial resources to support Catholic Identity;
- How effectively the school developed, implemented, and monitored a financial management system;
- How effectively the school reports its fiscal status to its shareholders;
- How effectively the school plans to ensure that its resources are sufficient to sustain the school’s program, carry out the school’s purpose, and support student achievement;
- How effective the school is at planning for its long-term viability;
- How effective the school is at planning for technology implementation, upgrades, etc.;
How effectively the school analyzed their financial position to determine the most effective way to exercise financial stewardship to ensure the financial viability of the school.

The Visiting Committee observed [begin writing here]

Chapter 4: The Action Plan

A. Design and Alignment of the Action Plan with the Self Study Findings

Accreditation Factor #11 (The Action Plan addresses the school’s critical goals to enhance student learning that supports high achievement of all students of the Schoolwide Learning Expectations, Arch/diocesan curriculum standards (local curriculum standards where Arch/diocesan standards don’t exist), and other institutional and/or governing authority expectations.)

Schoolwide Lists of Significant Accomplishments and Critical Goals

Schoolwide Significant Accomplishments (the eight most significant determined by the VC)
1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
5. 
6. 
7. 
8.

Critical Goals (identified by school)
1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
5.

Incorporate the following points in the Visiting Committee narrative describing how the school has aligned its Action Plan to its critical goals:

- How effectively the school identified critical goals that are focused on improving student learning;
- How effectively the Action Plan aligns with and addresses the school’s critical goals in order to support high achievement of all students;
- How effectively the Action Plan identifies specific strategies and activities to be accomplished;
• How effectively the Action Plan identifies implementation strategies (e.g., the person(s) responsible for implementation, costs, timeline, etc.);
• How effectively the Action Plan includes specific assessments designed to monitor growth in student learning.

The Visiting Committee observed [begin writing here]

PLEASE NOTE: The Visiting Committee is not required to complete either of the next two optional parts. If either or both of these parts are not used, the Visiting Committee should delete all text except for “OPTION A:” and “OPTION B:” and put N/A after each phrase. Delete this text before printing.

If either optional part is used, the Visiting Committee must have identified and clearly supported the need for this modification or new critical goal in the Report of Findings narrative. Delete this text before printing.

OPTION A: Modification of a critical goal:

If the finding of the Visiting Committee is that one of the school’s critical goals should be modified, the Visiting Committee should write a narrative describing what modifications are needed, and the rationale for these modifications.

Begin writing here or put N/A after OPTION A: if no modification is needed.

OPTION B: Critical Goal Identified by the Visiting Committee:

If the finding of the Visiting Committee is to replace a school’s critical goal in the school’s Action Plan, the Visiting Committee should identify which goal is to be replaced, and write a brief rationale for the school to use in incorporating this new critical goal identified by the Visiting Committee into the school’s Action Plan. NOTE: Because there can be no more than two critical goals from the Self Study incorporated into the School’s Action Plan, the Visiting Committee recommendation will replace one of the school’s two critical goals.

If the opinion of the Visiting Committee is to add a critical goal for incorporation into the school’s Action Plan in the future, the Visiting Committee should identify which goal is to be added, and write a brief rationale for the school to use in incorporating this new critical goal identified by the Visiting Committee into the school’s Action Plan. NOTE: The school’s Action Plan evolves over time and new critical goals are incorporated as critical goals are accomplished.

Begin writing here or put N/A after OPTION B: if no replacement critical goal is needed.

B. Capacity to Implement and Monitor the Action Plan

Accreditation Factor #12: The school demonstrates the capacity to implement and monitor an Action Plan that ensures high achievement of all students of the Schoolwide Learning Expectations, Arch/diocesan curriculum standards (local curriculum standards where Arch/diocesan standards don’t exist), and other governing authority expectations.
Incorporate the following points in the Visiting Committee narrative describing the schools capacity to implement and monitor their Action Plan:

- How effectively the school implemented the previous Action Plan and what effect might this have on implementation of the current Action Plan;
- How effective the monitoring processes (assessment/evaluation, communication to shareholders, involvement of shareholders in implementing and monitoring the Action Plan, etc.) are that are incorporated into the Action Plan;
- How effective the school plan is to evaluate the goals in the Action Plan on the basis of their impact on student achievement;
- How effectively the school identified resources needed for implementation of their Action Plan – especially those resources currently not available to the school;
- Any impediments that the school must address in order to accomplish the Action Plan.

Visiting Committee Summary Thoughts:

The Visiting Committee observed [begin writing here]
1. **Involvement and Collaboration of Shareholders in Completing the Self Study** – The school involves all shareholders in data review, analysis and dialogue about perceived accomplishments in the area of student learning, and in developing, implementing and monitoring goals for improvements in student learning.

*Highly Effective Rubric:* All school instructional staff and other shareholders* are appropriately involved in every aspect of data review, analysis and dialogue regarding perceived significant accomplishments and goals. The Self Study process occurs in a faith environment of ongoing systemic analysis of the school’s effectiveness in the six Key Self Study Outcomes. (*shareholders—see Key Terminology)

*Effective Rubric:* For the most part, school instructional staff and other shareholders are appropriately involved in data review, analysis and dialogue regarding perceived significant accomplishments and goals. The Self Study occurs in an faith environment of ongoing systemic analysis of the school’s effectiveness in the six Key Self Study Outcomes.

*Somewhat Effective Rubric:* There is partial involvement of school instructional staff and other shareholders in data review, analysis and dialogue to determine significant accomplishments and goals. The Self Study occurs in an environment of limited systemic analysis of the school’s effectiveness in the six Key Self Study Outcomes.

*Ineffective Rubric:* There is very limited involvement of school instructional staff or other shareholders in data review, analysis and dialogue to determine significant accomplishments and goals. There is no evidence of an environment of ongoing systemic analysis of the school’s effectiveness in the six Key Self Study Outcomes.

2. **Use of Prior Accreditation Findings to Support High Achievement of All Students** – The school has used the previous accreditation findings, both those discovered by the school and those identified by the Visiting Committee, and other pertinent data to ensure high achievement of all students and to drive school improvement.

*Highly Effective Rubric:* Ongoing systemic data analysis to enhance student learning permeates the school's culture and clearly drives student learning within a faith environment. All critical goals discovered by the school and identified by the Visiting Committee have been addressed successfully which has significantly impacted student learning and has ensured high achievement of all students in relation to faith and academic development.

*Effective Rubric:* Ongoing systemic data analysis to enhance student learning is evident within the school's faith culture. The majority of critical goals discovered by the school and identified by the Visiting Committee have been addressed which has impacted student learning and has ensured high achievement of all students in relation to faith and academic development.
**Somewhat Effective Rubric**: There is little evidence of ongoing systemic data analysis to enhance student learning. Critical goals discovered by the school and identified by the Visiting Committee have been addressed with limited impact on faith formation and student achievement in relation to faith and academic development.

**Ineffective Rubric**: There is no evidence of ongoing systemic data analysis to enhance student learning. Critical goals discovered by the school and identified by the Visiting Committee were not adequately addressed, and neither faith nor academic development of students have been positively impacted.

3. **Assessment of the School’s Catholic Identity** – The school is Catholic, approved by the Local Ordinary (Canon 803), providing opportunities for community worship and participation in the Sacraments, and promoting evangelization and service to the community.

**Highly Effective Rubric**: The Mission and Philosophy Statements clearly support strong evangelization through the integration of the Roman Catholic Faith into all aspects of school life. The total school community is involved in prayer experiences and the reception of the Sacraments on a regularly scheduled basis. The Religion curriculum and teaching methodology are alive and vibrant in classrooms; aligned with Roman Catholic teachings; approved by the local Ordinary; and meet the requirements set forth by the USCCB. Religious signs, sacramentals, traditions, and rituals of the Roman Catholic Church permeate the entire school culture. The administration provides additional faith formation opportunities for students and school personnel. School personnel are actively engaged in their personal faith journey and adhere to Arch/diocesan catechist certification and renewal requirements. There is active partnership on the part of parents in the faith formation of their children. Christian service is highly valued and integrated within the entire school community. All are actively engaged in bringing the Good News of Jesus into the total educational experience and there is an observable vibrancy of faith within the total school environment.

**Effective Rubric**: The Mission and Philosophy Statements indicate the integration of the Roman Catholic Faith into all aspects of school life. Most of the school community is involved in prayer experiences and the reception of the Sacraments on a regular basis. The administration provides prayer and retreat opportunities for students and school personnel. The Religion curriculum and methods of instruction are current with the requirements of the Arch/diocese and the USCCB. There is appropriate use of religious signs, sacramentals, traditions, and rituals of the Roman Catholic Church within the school. The school adheres to Arch/diocesan catechist certification and renewal requirements. The administration provides opportunities for parents to meet with teachers regarding the ongoing spiritual and academic formation of their children. The school provides opportunities for service-oriented outreach to the Church and the civic community. Most are actively engaged in bringing the Good News of Jesus into the total educational experience. The school environment is a testimony to its Catholicity and the development of faith among students.

**Somewhat Effective Rubric**: The Mission and Philosophy Statements indicate an integration of the Roman Catholic Faith into the school community but not to a level of depth that clearly impacts every aspect of school life. While classroom prayer and some opportunities for Eucharistic liturgy are provided, the school community is not engaged in providing a
variety of prayer experiences, retreat experiences and liturgies on a regular basis. The Religion curriculum and methods of instruction are somewhat current with the requirements of the Arch/diocese and the USCCB. The use of the appropriate religious signs, sacramentals, traditions, and rituals of the Roman Catholic Church is somewhat evident. There is a limited program of ongoing spiritual and catechetical formation for school personnel. When available, not all faculty and other school personnel make use of the program. While parents are encouraged to visit with teachers periodically to keep apprised of their children’s progress in their spiritual and academic education, the school provides limited opportunities to do so. There are very limited opportunities provided by the school for service-oriented outreach to the Church and the civic community. Some school personnel are actively engaged in bringing the Good News of Jesus into the educational experience.

**Ineffective Rubric:** The Mission and Philosophy Statements do not reflect integration of the Roman Catholic Faith into the school community. There is no regular schedule or program for prayer and retreat experiences other than classroom prayer and Eucharistic liturgy on special occasions. The Religion curriculum and methods of instruction are not current or consistent with Arch/diocesan requirements and those of the USCCB. The use of the appropriate religious signs, sacramentals, traditions, and rituals of the Roman Catholic Church is not evident. There is no formal program of ongoing spiritual and catechetical formation for school personnel. The involvement of the parents with the administration and faculty regarding the ongoing spiritual and academic formation of their children is very limited. There are no opportunities provided by the school for service-oriented outreach to the Church or civic community. It is not evident that school personnel are actively engaged in bringing the Good News of Jesus into the total educational experience.

4. **Defining the School’s Purpose** – The school’s purpose is defined through the school’s mission statement, philosophy, measurable Schoolwide Learning Expectations, Arch/diocesan curriculum standards (local curriculum standards where Arch/diocesan standards don’t exist), and other governing authority expectations.

**Highly Effective Rubric:** The school’s mission statement, philosophy, measurable Schoolwide Learning Expectations, Arch/diocesan curriculum standards, and other governing authority expectations are fully integrated into the lived reality of the school. All shareholders are involved in the review and revision of the school’s mission statement, philosophy and measurable Schoolwide Learning Expectations. The SLE indicators are clearly measurable. Curriculum standards fully define the spiritual and academic purpose of the school in setting high expectations for student achievement. Additional governing authority expectations*are clearly articulated. All of these pieces define and support the school’s purpose to a high degree. (*see Key Terminology)

**Effective Rubric:** The school’s mission statement, philosophy, measurable Schoolwide Learning Expectations, Arch/diocesan curriculum standards, and other governing authority expectations are integrated into the lived reality of the school. Shareholders are involved in the review and revision of the school’s mission statement, philosophy and measurable Schoolwide Learning Expectations. The SLE indicators are measurable. Curriculum standards define the spiritual and academic purpose of the school in setting high expectations
for student achievement. Additional governing authority expectations are articulated. All of these pieces define and support the school’s purpose.

**Somewhat Effective Rubric:** The school’s mission statement, philosophy, measurable Schoolwide Learning Expectations, Arch/diocesan curriculum standards, and other governing authority expectations have minimal impact in the lived reality of the school. Shareholder involvement is limited in the review and revision of the school’s mission statement, philosophy and measurable Schoolwide Learning Expectations. The SLE indicators are not clearly measurable. Curriculum standards somewhat define the faith and academic purpose of the school in setting expectations for student achievement. Additional governing authority expectations are not clearly articulated. The identified pieces do not clearly define and support the school’s purpose.

**Ineffective Rubric:** The school’s mission statement, philosophy, measurable Schoolwide Learning Expectations, Arch/diocesan curriculum standards, and other governing authority expectations have no impact in the lived reality of the school. Shareholder involvement is not evident in the review and revision of the school’s mission statement, philosophy and measurable Schoolwide Learning Expectations. The SLE indicators are not measurable. Curriculum standards do not define the faith and academic purpose of the school in setting expectations for student achievement. Additional governing authority expectations are not articulated. The identified pieces are fragmented and do not define and support the school’s purpose.

5. **Organization for Student Learning to Support High Achievement of All Students** – The organizational structures of the school focus on high achievement of all students, and communicate student progress to all shareholders.

**Highly Effective Rubric:** Organizational structures are in place, clearly defined, and understood by all shareholders. The governing authority* includes appropriate input from shareholders. Leadership is vibrant and highly supportive of the faith formation and academic achievement of all students. Faculty and staff are cohesive and fully committed to high achievement of all students. Student achievement is consistently communicated in a variety of ways to parents and other shareholders. The Catholic school environment is enhanced and enriched by the full participation of all organizational structures. (*governing authority—see Key Terminology)

**Effective Rubric:** Organizational structures are in place, defined, and understood by shareholders. The governing authority includes appropriate input from shareholders. Leadership is active and supportive of the faith formation and academic achievement of all students. Faculty and staff are committed to high achievement of all students. Student achievement is consistently communicated to parents and other shareholders. The Catholic school environment is supported by the participation of all organizational structures.

Somewhat Effective Rubric: Organizational structures are in place, but may not be clearly defined, or understood by shareholders. The governing authority includes some input from shareholders. Leadership is aware of the faith formation and academic achievement of students. Faculty and staff are committed to the achievement of most students. Student...
achievement is inconsistently communicated to parents and other shareholders. The Catholic school environment is supported by the participation of some organizational structures.

**Ineffective Rubric:** Organizational structures are not in place, defined, or understood by shareholders. The governing authority does not include input from shareholders. Leadership has little impact on the faith formation and academic achievement of all students. Faculty and staff have minimal commitment to the achievement of students. Student achievement is not clearly communicated to parents and other shareholders. The Catholic school environment lacks the support of the organizational structures.

6. **Data Analysis and Action to Support High Achievement of All Students** – The school uses educationally sound assessment processes to collect data. The school disaggregates and analyzes student performance data and uses the analysis as a basis for instructional/curricular improvement.

*Highly Effective Rubric:* The collection of student achievement data is ongoing (systemic), research based, and includes a variety of assessments* in all grades. There is a high degree of documentation, disaggregation, and discussion of data. Extensive analysis of data includes identifying trends, discerning individual student needs, and using these findings to adjust instruction and enhance programs to improve student learning. (*assessments and disaggregation—see Key Terminology)  

*Effective Rubric:* There is a commitment to the collection of a variety of student achievement data in all grades. There is documentation, disaggregation, and discussion of data. Analysis of data includes identifying trends, discerning individual student needs, and using these findings to adjust instruction and enhance programs to improve student learning.

*Somewhat Effective Rubric:* Some data is collected and disaggregated but with unclear or limited interpretations. Trends and possible issues are identified to a limited degree. Disaggregated data is presented to staff and a few other shareholders in a general manner.

*Ineffective Rubric:* Incomplete data is collected and presented with little interpretation provided for instructional staff and other shareholders.

7. **High Achievement by All Students Toward Clearly Defined SLEs and Curriculum Standards** – All students make acceptable and measurable progress toward clearly defined Schoolwide Learning Expectations and challenging, comprehensive, and relevant curriculum standards.

*Highly Effective Rubric:* Students show significant growth in learning within the context of the total Catholic school environment. Multiple measures validate progress for all students - i.e. all subgroups of students*. Schoolwide Learning Expectations are used as the foundation for learning, are measurable and are clearly articulated throughout the school community. Curriculum standards, integrated with Catholic Identity, are rigorous and are used as the foundation and benchmark for student learning. (*sub-groups—see Key Terminology)
**Effective Rubric:** Students show growth in learning within the context of the total Catholic school environment. Multiple measures do validate this progress for all students – i.e. all subgroups of students. Schoolwide Learning Expectations are visibly connected to student learning. There is alignment with curriculum standards which are integrated with Catholic Identity.

**Somewhat Effective Rubric:** There is a disparity in relation to overall growth in learning and achievement. Assessment measures show growth targets are not being reached for some subgroups of students. SLEs and curriculum standards are sporadically used as the basis for instruction and it is unclear how they are connecting to the Catholic Identity of the school. Assessment measures show growth targets are not being reached for some subgroups of students.

**Ineffective Rubric:** There is perceived limited student learning within the context of the school environment and little indication of the integration of the Schoolwide Learning Expectations and a faith based curriculum. Growth targets need refinement and clarity in order to measure student achievement. Assessment measures indicate that learning targets are not being reached for subgroups of students.

8. **Instructional Methodology to Support High Achievement of All Students** – The staff applies research-based knowledge about teaching and learning in the instructional process. Assessment is frequent and varied, integrated into the teaching/learning process, and informs curriculum planning.

**Highly Effective Rubric:** All teaching staff utilize a wide variety of classroom teaching methodologies leading toward a high degree of faith formation, academic achievement and student growth. Learning expectations for students are high but realistic and are firmly anchored in a culture of research-based methodology. Curricular planning is structured, consistent and collaborative. Frequent and varied formative and summative assessments are clearly used to monitor student growth and modify instruction.

**Effective Rubric:** Teaching staff utilizes a variety of teaching methodologies focusing on faith formation and academic achievement. There is adequate curricular planning and structure. Assessment is frequent and varied and is often used to modify teaching and learning.

**Somewhat Effective Rubric:** Effective classroom instruction is limited among some teachers and is not necessarily reflective of best practices in relation to faith formation and academic achievement. Assessment is limited and is not utilized to monitor/modify teaching and learning.

**Ineffective Rubric:** Overall teaching methodology is inadequate. Assessment is ineffective and is not observed to be utilized to monitor/modify teaching and learning.
9. **Support for Student Spiritual, Personal, and Academic Growth** – Within the school’s community of faith, students have opportunities to participate in support services and activities to assist them in accessing the curricular and co-curricular programs to achieve the Schoolwide Learning Expectations, Arch/diocesan curriculum standards (local curriculum standards where Arch/diocesan standards don’t exist), and other governing authority expectations.

**Highly Effective Rubric:** Within the school’s community of faith, students have a plethora of opportunities to participate in support services and activities that ensure the highest possible degree of student success. Leadership, faculty, staff and shareholders are fully committed to providing an engaging and enriching environment that supports all students’ achievement of the Schoolwide Learning Expectations, Arch/diocesan curriculum standards, and other governing authority expectations.

**Effective Rubric:** Students have opportunities to participate in support services and activities that ensure student success. Leadership, faculty, staff and shareholders provide an environment that supports all students’ achievement of the Schoolwide Learning Expectations, Arch/diocesan curriculum standards and other governing authority expectations.

**Somewhat Effective Rubric:** Students have limited opportunities to participate in support services and activities that ensure student success. Leadership, faculty, staff and shareholders provide an environment that occasionally supports students’ achievement of the Schoolwide Learning Expectations, Arch/diocesan curriculum standards and other governing authority expectations.

**Ineffective Rubric:** Students have inadequate support services and activities to ensure student success. Leadership, faculty, staff and shareholders exert minimal effort to provide an environment that supports all students’ achievement of the Schoolwide Learning Expectations, Arch/diocesan curriculum standards and other governing authority expectations.

10. **Resource Management and Development to Support High Achievement of All Students**

– The pastor, principal, and school board develop, implement, and monitor resources and plans to ensure the sustainability of the school program and support high achievement of all students of the Schoolwide Learning Expectations, Arch/diocesan curriculum standards (local curriculum standards where Arch/diocesan standards don’t exist), and other governing authority expectations.

**Highly Effective Rubric:** The resources available to the school enhance/expand the school program, reflect sound financial practices and responsible stewardship to a high degree. Resources are extensive and are used effectively to carry out the school’s mission, philosophy, and Schoolwide Learning Expectations in supporting high achievement of all students. There is an acted upon comprehensive plan for the long-term viability of the school.
**Effective Rubric:** The resources available to the school adequately sustain the school program; reflect reasonable financial practices and responsible stewardship. Resources are used to carry out the school mission, philosophy, and Schoolwide Learning Expectations. There is a plan for the long-term viability of the school.

**Somewhat Effective Rubric:** The resources available to the school do not support the school program, reflect reasonable financial practices and responsible stewardship. Resources are not appropriately used to carry out the school mission, philosophy, and Schoolwide Learning Expectations. There is minimal planning for viability.

**Ineffective Rubric:** Lack of financial resources prevents the school from sustaining the school's core programs and continuing its faith mission. There is an absence of planning for the school's viability. The school is in danger of closing in the near future.

**11. Design and Alignment of the Action Plan with the Self Study Findings** – The Action Plan addresses the school’s critical goals to enhance student learning that supports high achievement of all students of the Schoolwide Learning Expectations, Arch/diocesan curriculum standards (local curriculum standards where Arch/diocesan standards don’t exist), and other governing authority expectations.

**Highly Effective Rubric:** The School’s Action Plan addresses, to a high degree, the multiple and varied critical goals identified by the school which supports high achievement of all students, the Schoolwide Learning Expectations, Arch/diocesan curriculum standards and other governing authority expectations. There has been a thorough analysis of all appropriate data/information about student achievement, and each goal is well documented and rigorous.

**Effective Rubric:** The School’s Action plan addresses the multiple and varied critical goals identified by the school which supports high achievement of all students, the Schoolwide Learning Expectations, Arch/diocesan curriculum standards and other governing authority expectations. There has been analysis of appropriate data/information about student achievement and each goal is addressed adequately.

**Somewhat Effective Rubric:** The school’s Action Plan is somewhat focused on improving student achievement, the Schoolwide Learning Expectations, Arch/diocesan curriculum standards and other governing authority expectations. There appears to have been little analysis of data/information about student achievement and documentation is incomplete in relation.

**Ineffective Rubric:** The school’s Action Plan has little, if any; focus on improving student learning and faith development and is not perceived to be tied to the school’s Schoolwide Learning Expectations or curriculum standards. There is no analysis of data/information about student achievement or supported documentation.
12. **Capacity to Implement and Monitor the Action Plan** – The school demonstrates the capacity to implement and monitor an Action Plan that ensures high achievement of all students of the Schoolwide Learning Expectations, Arch/diocesan curriculum standards (local curriculum standards where Arch/diocesan standards don’t exist), and other governing authority expectations.

*Highly Effective Rubric:* There is a well-documented and concerted effort by the entire school community to fully integrate the Action Plan into the culture of the school thus ensuring high achievement of all students in relation to faith and academic development. Shareholders are aware and integrally involved in implementation of the goals and strategies. Goals and strategies will be evaluated in terms of impact on a regular basis and student achievement results shared consistently with all shareholders. Student achievement results will be used to identify priorities and further actions for improvement.

*Effective Rubric:* Leadership and instructional staff embrace the integration of the Action Plan within the school. The goals and strategies of the Action Plan include ongoing and methodical assessment of the goals and strategies. Shareholders are aware and appropriately involved in implementation of the goals and strategies. Goals and strategies will be evaluated in terms of impact on student achievement and results shared regularly with all shareholders. Student achievement results will be used to identify priorities and further actions for improvement.

*Somewhat Effective Rubric:* There is a general understanding by school administration and instructional staff about the need for implementation. The link between the Action Plan and student learning is weak and not clearly understood by administration and instructional staff and other shareholders.

*Ineffective Rubric:* The process of implementation is not clarified as to who will be responsible and what will be accomplished. The need and value to link the Action Plan to high student achievement is not understood by administration and instructional staff and other shareholders.
Improving Student Learning for Catholic Schools

JUSTIFICATION STATEMENT

For proper processing, please complete the information in the box:

Chair Name:

Code and Name of School Visited:

Chair Phone Numbers:           Work:
                                  Home:
                                  Cell:

Chair e-mail address:

Signatures

Visiting Committee Member  Visiting Committee Member

Visiting Committee Member  Visiting Committee Member

Visiting Committee Member  Visiting Committee Member

Visiting Committee Chairperson

Signed hard copy as well as electronic copy (Word format only – not pdf) is to be given to the Elementary Commissioner following the Accreditation Visit.
On the following pages, insert the rating that best fits the results of the Self Study and the visit that was selected through Visiting Committee dialogue and consensus. (Highlight the underlined section after Rating and type the appropriate rating. Font and size are preset.)

HIGHLY EFFECTIVE: The results of the Self Study and the visit provide evidence of (1) the achievement of a high degree of student learning with respect to the Accreditation Factor and (2) a strong operable school improvement process not requiring external monitoring.

EFFECTIVE: The results of the Self Study and the visit provide evidence of (1) the achievement of student learning with respect to the Accreditation Factor; and (2) the need for some minimal outside monitoring to support the school improvement process.

SOMEWHAT EFFECTIVE: The results of the Self Study and the visit provide limited evidence of (1) the achievement of student learning with respect to the Accreditation Factor and (2) the necessity for outside monitoring to support the school's improvement.

INEFFECTIVE: The results of the Self Study and the visit provide little, if any, evidence of (1) the achievement of student learning with respect to the Accreditation Factor and (2) the necessity for consistent outside monitoring to support the school's improvement process.

RUBRICS: The rubrics for determining if an Accreditation Factor is Highly Effective, Effective, Somewhat Effective, or Ineffective can be found in Appendix K of ISL.

On the following pages, provide a brief narrative that describes the degree to which the school supports student learning through each Accreditation Factor. The statements made in the narrative should reflect statements made in the Report of Findings. No ‘new’ information should be included in the narratives in this Justification Statement. If it is not said in the Report of Findings, it should not be stated in the Justification Statement.

Special note on using this template: Delete the sections in blue above. Highlight "Begin writing here", change the font color to black, and enter text. Be sure to include language found in the Report of Findings and is found in the Self Study, evidence, or during the Visit. Delete this box before printing.
An accreditation term is based upon a school demonstrating the following:

1. **Involvement and Collaboration of Shareholders in Completing the Self Study.** The school involves all shareholders in data review, analysis and dialogue about perceived accomplishments in the area of student learning, and in developing, implementing and monitoring goals for improvements in student learning. (Key Self Study Outcome #2; ACS WASC Category-Based Criterion A.7)

   Visiting Committee Rating: _______

   Narrative Rationale: Begin writing here

2. **Use of Prior Accreditation Findings to Support High Achievement of All Students.** The school has used the prior accreditation findings, both those discovered by the school and those identified by the Visiting Committee, and other pertinent data to ensure high achievement of all students and to drive school improvement. (Key Self Study Outcome #4; ACS WASC Category-Based Criterion A.7)

   Visiting Committee Rating: _______

   Narrative Rationale: Begin writing here

3. **Assessment of the School’s Catholic Identity.** The school is Catholic, approved by the Local Ordinary (Canon 803), providing opportunities for community worship and participation in the Sacraments, and promoting evangelization and service to the community. (Key Self Study Outcome #1; ACS WASC Category-Based Criteria A.1, A.5, C.1, C.2)

   Visiting Committee Rating: _______

   Narrative Rationale: Begin writing here

4. **Defining the School’s Purpose.** The school’s purpose is defined through the school’s mission statement, philosophy, measurable Schoolwide Learning Expectations, Arch/diocesan curriculum standards (local curriculum standards where Arch/diocesan standards don’t exist), and other institutional and/or governing authority expectations. (Key Self Study Outcome #3; ACS WASC Category-Based Criteria A.1, A.2, A.3)

   Visiting Committee Rating: _______

   Narrative Rationale: Begin writing here
5. **Organization for Student Learning to Support High Achievement of All Students.** The organizational structures of the school focus on high achievement of all students, and communicate student progress to all shareholders. (Key Self Study Outcomes #2 & #3; ACS WASC Category-Based Criteria A.2, A.3, A.4, A.5, A.6, A.7)

Visiting Committee Rating: 

Narrative Rationale: **Begin writing here**

6. **Data Analysis and Action to Support High Achievement of All Students.** The school uses educationally sound assessment processes to collect data. The school disaggregates and analyzes student performance data and uses the analysis as a basis for instructional/curricular improvement. (Key Self Study Outcome #4; ACS WASC Category-Based Criteria A.6, B.3)

Visiting Committee Rating: 

Narrative Rationale: **Begin writing here**

7. **High Achievement By All Students Toward Clearly Defined SLEs and Curriculum Standards.** All students make acceptable and measurable progress toward clearly defined Schoolwide Learning Expectations and challenging, comprehensive, and relevant curriculum standards. (Key Self Study Outcomes #3 & #4; ACS WASC Category-Based Criteria A.6, B.1, B.3)

Visiting Committee Rating: 

Narrative Rationale: **Begin writing here**

8. **Instructional Methodology to Support High Achievement of all Students.** The staff applies research-based knowledge about teaching and learning in the instructional process. Assessment is frequent and varied, integrated into the teaching/learning process, and informs curriculum planning. (Key Self Study Outcomes #3 & #4; ACS WASC Category-Based Criteria A.4, A.6, B.2, B.3)

Visiting Committee Rating: 

Narrative Rationale: **Begin writing here**

9. **Support for Student Spiritual, Personal, and Academic Growth.** Within the school’s community of faith, students have opportunities to participate in support services and activities to assist them in accessing the curricular and co-curricular programs to achieve the
Schoolwide Learning Expectations, Arch/diocesan curriculum standards (local curriculum standards where Arch/diocesan standards don’t exist), and other institutional and/or governing authority expectations. (Key Self Study Outcomes #3 & #4; ACS WASC Category-Based Criteria C.1, C.2)

Visiting Committee Rating: ______

Narrative Rationale: Begin writing here

10. Resource Management and Development to Support High Achievement of all Students. The pastor, principal, and school board develop, implement, and monitor resources and plans to ensure and support high achievement of all students of the Schoolwide Learning Expectations, Arch/diocesan curriculum standards (local curriculum standards where Arch/diocesan standards don’t exist), and other institutional and/or governing authority expectations. (Key Self Study Outcome #6; ACS WASC Category-Based Criteria B.3, D.1, D.2)

Visiting Committee Rating: ______

Narrative Rationale: Begin writing here

11. Design and Alignment of the Action Plan with the Self Study Findings. The Action Plan addresses the school’s goals to enhance student learning that supports high achievement of all students of the Schoolwide Learning Expectations, Arch/diocesan curriculum standards (local curriculum standards where Arch/diocesan standards don’t exist), and other institutional and/or governing authority expectations. (Key Self Study Outcome #5; ACS WASC Category-Based Criteria A.7, D.1, D.2)

Visiting Committee Rating: ______

Narrative Rationale: Begin writing here

12. Capacity to Implement and Monitor the Action Plan. The school demonstrates the capacity to implement and monitor an Action Plan that ensures high achievement of all students of the Schoolwide Learning Expectations, Arch/diocesan curriculum standards (local curriculum standards where Arch/diocesan standards don’t exist), and other institutional and/or governing authority expectations. (Key Self Study Outcome #6; ACS WASC Category-Based Criteria A.7, D.1, D.2)

Visiting Committee Rating: ______

Narrative Rationale: Begin writing here
Recommendation for Accreditation Status for Catholic Elementary Schools

Code and Name of School Visited:  
Full Address of School:  
Enrollment at School:  
Grades to be Accredited:  
Name of (Arch)Diocese:  
Dates of School Accreditation Visit:  

One of three accreditation statuses may be conferred on a school as a result of a WCEA Accreditation Visit. Regardless of Accreditation Status, all schools must submit an annual WCEA Report of Progress to the Arch/diocesan WCEA Elementary Commissioner using the format approved by the Commissioner.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Typed Names</th>
<th>Signatures</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visiting Committee Member</td>
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Signed hard copy **as well as** electronic copy (Word format only – **not** pdf) is to be given to the Elementary Commissioner following the Accreditation Visit.
☐ **FULL SIX-YEAR ACCREDITATION:** Six-Year Accreditation Status with a required Annual Report of Progress to the WCEA Elementary Commissioner: The school performs mainly at or above the **Effective** level on all Accreditation Factors of the accreditation process and any recommendations of the Visiting Committee do not detract to a serious degree from the quality of the school's educational program. The Visiting Committee’s use of Option A in the *Report of Findings* is generally considered not to detract from the quality of the school’s program. Schools must submit a WCEA Annual Report of Progress to the WCEA Elementary Commissioner using the format approved by the Commissioner.

☐ **PROVISIONAL SIX-YEAR ACCREDITATION:** Six-Year Accreditation Status with a required Annual Report of Progress to the WCEA Elementary Commissioner, a midterm report, and a required 1-day revisit: The school performs at the **Somewhat Effective** level in two or more of the Accreditation Factors and/or the Visiting Committee has made recommendations concerning critical goals using Option B in the Report of Findings. Schools must submit a WCEA Annual Report of Progress to the Elementary Commissioner using the format approved by the Commissioner. The Accredited With Provisions schools will also complete a Third-Year Progress Report instead of an Annual Report of Progress using a format approved by the Elementary Commissioner. In addition to the revised Action Plan, Annual Reports of Progress, and the Third-Year Progress Report, all Accredited With Provisions schools will receive a one-day revisit three (3) years after the Accreditation Visit to ensure that the recommendations of the Visiting Committee are being addressed. The Third-Year Progress Report will serve as the base document for the revisit. The revisit committee is ordinarily the Chair of the original visit and one other member from the original Visiting Committee.

☐ **CONDITIONAL SIX-YEAR ACCREDITATION:** Six-year Accreditation Status with a required comprehensive progress report to the WCEA Elementary Commissioner at the end of the first year addressing the concerns of the Visiting Committee, and a visit by the WCEA Elementary Commissioner or a Visiting Committee: The school performs at the **Ineffective** level on two or more of the Accreditation Factors and the Visiting Committee has identified area(s) that seriously and negatively impact student learning. The Visiting Committee has made recommendations concerning critical goals using Option B of the Report of Findings. The school/school system is provided a year to demonstrate progress toward addressing the required actions. At the end of the year, the school/school system submits a comprehensive progress report to the Elementary Commissioner. The report is reviewed by the Elementary Commissioner to ensure sufficient progress is being made on the recommendations of the Visiting Committee. Depending on the progress of the school in meeting the recommendations of the Visiting Committee, and other factors impacting the school, the Elementary Commissioner may request 1) Accredited with Provisions Status which requires a revisit in two years, 2) extension of the Conditional Accreditation for one more year due to external factors or unforeseen circumstances, or Denial of Accreditation. Any change of status must be approved by the WCEA Elementary Commission.
The Status Recommendation

This is a confidential report. Unless the school contests the Accreditation Status, the contents of the Recommendation for Accreditation Status are known only to the Visiting Committee, the Arch/diocesan Superintendent, and the WCEA Elementary Commissioners.

The rationale for accreditation status depends upon the degree to which the Accreditation Factors are fulfilled in the Justification Statement and the consensus of the Visiting Committee.

Each member of the Visiting Committee must sign the Recommendation for Accreditation Status before departure. The Visiting Committee chairperson sends the original, signed copy of this document as well as electronic copy to the Arch/diocesan WCEA Commissioner.

Visiting Committee’s Recommendations from the Report of Findings. If the recommendations have a significant impact on student learning, please explain.

Begin writing here

Provide a complete narrative, which summarizes the Visiting Committee’s rationale for the recommended conditions (If there is an unresolved minority opinion please indicate and explain.)

◆ Accreditation Statuses seriously considered: Begin writing here

◆ Reasons for the recommended Status: Begin writing here

In the narrative, reflect upon the following:

◆ The visiting committee’s discussions and process (summarize as needed in the narrative)
◆ The degree to which students are learning
◆ The strength of the school in all areas of the program and the operation
◆ The capacity of the school to implement and monitor the action plan
TIPS ON CONTENT AND WRITING STYLE

1) Use the full name of a course or program.

2) Capitalize a word or phrase only if it refers to a specific course or program.

3) Verify the following references and others as appropriate.
   a. Self study
   b. Exhibits/Evidence
   c. Conference with "whom...”:
      - Administration
      - Faculty
      - Staff
      - Students
      - Parents
      - Pastor(s)/Clergy
      - Others
   d. Observation of "What":
      - Classroom
      - Extended care facility, etc.
      - Other possible references:
      - School publications
      - Courses of study, etc.

4) When writing avoid the use of continue to, consider, study, explore, etc. If needed, give specific directions such as create, implement, design, etc.

5) Seek quality not quantity of issues. Ask the question:
   e. Would the implementation of an effective solution to this issue enhance student learning and improve the quality of the educational programs of the school?

6) Say what you mean and mean what you say
   a. Principal means the principal.
   b. Administration means principal, vice-principal and/or pastor.
   c. Faculty means teachers.
   d. Staff means the support staff, secretary, nurse, bookkeeper, aides, maintenance, custodian, etc.

7) Do not use personal names. Use “Principal” or “Pastor” rather than “Sr. Mary Wonderful” or “Father Awesome”.

8) Use the third person “the Visiting Committee” rather than “we”, and “the school” (or the name of the school) rather than “you” in the Report of Findings and other documents.
WRITING RESOURCES FOR VISITING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The most important resources are the Report of Findings template and the Accreditation Factors and Rubrics (Appendix K in ISL 2012 reproduced here in the VC Manual).

When writing the narratives in the Report of Findings, VC members are urged to use language that directly addresses the writing points in the Report of Findings template (bullets in the blue text); and/or use language that directly addresses the specific rubric found in the in the Accreditation Factors and Rubrics. This will help clarify the rating in the Justification Statement and make determining an Accreditation Status easier. Both the template and the rubrics are found in this manual for use by the Visiting Committee.

The following pages give examples taken from actual Reports of Findings, and Justification Statements. In each example, the narrative from the Report is given first, then the narrative from the Justification Statement. VC members should note 1) that the language in the Report of Findings narrative supports the rating – sometimes using rating language, sometimes using generic language; and 2) the Justification Statement uses the exact same language and tone as found in the Report of Findings narrative. Note: school names have been removed, and some generic language inserted (e.g., school board) for the sake of clarity and consistency.

Some Chairs prefer to use rating language in the narratives; some do not. Your Chair will inform you of his/her preference at the pre-visit.

NOTE: The examples used on the following pages are taken from ISL 2010 Report of Findings document. When examples from ISL 2012 Report of Findings documents become available, these examples will be updated. The 2010 version uses specific questions for writing prompts. The 2012 version uses a unified narrative similar to the unified narrative in the Self Study that incorporates writing points. The concept of matching the language to the rating remains the same.
EXAMPLES OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE LANGUAGE

Accreditation Factor #4 Mission & Purpose:

Report of Findings: The school’s Mission and SLEs determine the relevance and implementation of appropriate instruction to meet academic standards. The school has recently developed a measurement tool and assessment process to evaluate all student outcomes of SLEs. The SLEs are reviewed by parents, students, and teachers in order to evaluate the student’s progress. The SLEs are posted and are referenced by teachers in their daily lessons and assessments. There is student work that demonstrates integration of SLEs across the curriculum.

Justification Statement: Narrative Rationale: The Mission and Philosophy of the School clearly reflects the Catholic nature of the school “to educate the whole child within the Catholic Christian tradition.” The school’s Mission and SLEs determine the relevance and implementation of appropriate instruction to meet academic standards.
EXAMPLES OF EFFECTIVE LANGUAGE

Accreditation Factor #1 Shareholder Involvement:

Report of Findings: The principal met with groups of teachers early in her administration to learn about the history and culture of the school. Although discussion groups did not include groups of parents, the principal did reach out and meet with individual parents and small groups of parents to obtain their input. The parents, students, and staff did complete surveys and felt that their input had been heard by the administration as part of completing this Self Study. As written, the Action Plan includes ongoing communication with parents about the completion of the strategies in the Plan. Although not written in the Self Study, it was obvious to the Visiting Committee that the current principal intends to keep parents in the loop. The principal has already made numerous efforts to reach out to the parent community. The PTA is also a strong support in the affairs of the school. [Note: as stated elsewhere in the Report, the principal was new to the school during the year of the Accreditation Visit.]

Justification Statement: Although discussion groups did not include groups of parents, the principal did reach out and meet with individual parents and small groups of parents to obtain their input. The parents, students, and staff did complete surveys and felt that their input had been heard by the administration as part of completing this Self Study.
EXAMPLES OF SOMEWHAT EFFECTIVE LANGUAGE

Accreditation Factor #1 Shareholder Involvement:

Report of Findings: The school has been somewhat effective in involving shareholders in the complete Self Study data review and analysis process. A limited number of parents, students, parishioners and alumni served on Self Study committees. Shareholders other than faculty and staff do not appear to have been involved in data analysis and review. Through discussion and observation it is evident that the School will continue to communicate to its shareholders the progress made in the achievement of the goals through the newsletter, school board meetings, the school website, conferences, and progress reports. The school will monitor the action plan for success through the annual review of testing data, the evidence of teachers applying practices within the classroom, and continual monitoring by the principal. As the school board expands its membership bringing in new members with different viewpoints the school board will increase its focus on student learning.

Justification Statement: Narrative Rationale: A limited number of parents, students, parishioners and alumni served on Self Study committees. Shareholders other than faculty and staff do not appear to have been involved in data analysis and review.
EXAMPLES OF INEFFECTIVE LANGUAGE

Accreditation Factor #

Report of Findings: All teachers have copies of curriculum maps including rubrics for measuring student achievement. These Archdiocesan standards, maps, and rubrics are of the highest quality, but appear to be of limited use in curriculum and lesson planning. The Visiting Committee strongly recommends that the Archdiocesan standards and maps be utilized across the curriculum in preparation for implementation of the Common Core State Standards. The school is not measuring student achievement of the SLEs. The Visiting Committee highly recommends that teams of teachers formulate grade-appropriate rubrics for measuring the SLEs. As stated previously, teachers have the tools to measure student achievement, but are not utilizing these tools effectively. This may be a matter of Staff Development to get all the teachers working together in a unified approach to curriculum. Only recently has the school begun to analyze student progress according to the standards and SAT 10 scores. The school has made a great start and is encouraged to continue this implementation.

Justification Statement: Narrative Rationale: The Archdiocesan standards, maps, and rubrics are of the highest quality, but appear to be of limited use in curriculum and lesson planning. The school is not measuring student achievement of the SLEs. Only recently has the school begun to analyze student progress according to the standards and SAT 10 scores.