

# STANDARDS AND INDICATORS OF SCHOOL ACCREDITATION

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## ABSTRACT

*Accredited schools are committed to being better today than they were yesterday. This commitment to continuous improvement is demonstrated by the schools' adherence to the standards and implementation of a quality improvement process that yields results for students. Also, knowledge about those standards and indicators enlarges the vision of looking at the schools. Standards, indicators and the impact statements enable us to analyze the institutional performance better. Shared perception of all the stakeholders gives the direction to progress and development. Thus, awareness of quality indicators enables all the parties of the educational system to have a suitable focus for education. Quality is reality. Assessment of quality through indicators is an actuality.*

## INTRODUCTION

Education has brought about technological advancement, industrialization, globalization and effective means of communication. Economic stability and social prosperity are also the results of education. This has increased a sense of contest and challenges in the field of education. There are resources available to run educational institutions. Profitability of the educational institutions has also increased. All these facts have led to competition among the providers of education. Healthy competition always results in better performance. Providers of education all over the world have realized the necessity to monitor performance.

Today's children will face new challenges in an ever-changing world. The knowledge and skills they learn today must prepare them with the tools they need for future success and to be productive citizens. Accordingly, our system of education is intended to provide all students the following:

- ❖ Academic skills and knowledge to succeed in today's global information age, economy, higher education, armed services and other opportunities.
- ❖ An excellent grounding in the history, principles and form of our political system of self-government and constitutional liberty, and the ability to fully and thoughtfully participate in political activities and elections.

- ❖ An excellent understanding of history, civics, political science and conflict resolution.
- ❖ A broad cultural exposure, including comprehension of the arts, humanities, and the classics.
- ❖ The opportunity to participate in community involvement including volunteering, social studies and character development, membership in community associations, clubs and organizations, athletics, student mentoring and similar activities.

To ensure that our schools provide these tools for every child, our system needs a fair, challenging and supportive accreditation system to help all schools be good schools.

## SCHOOL ACCREDITATION

"Accreditation engages the entire school community in a continuous process of self-evaluation, reflection, and improvement". Accreditation is a voluntary method of quality assurance. Accreditation engages the entire school community in a continuous process of self-evaluation, reflection, and improvement. It invites external scrutiny and welcomes the constructive feedback of peers. It demands rigour, is based on data, and approaches the documentation of results with discipline. Accreditation is about making the quest for excellence a habit; it's about being the best a school can be on behalf of the students it serves. The School Accreditation Process provides school

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with a comprehensive framework for continually improving student achievement and school effectiveness.

## **THE STANDARDS, INDICATORS AND THE IMPACT STATEMENTS**

For good accreditation, the schools must follow certain standards. These standards can be attained by exemplary practices and processes which we call indicators. Together, the indicators provide a comprehensive picture of each standard. Each standard followed by indicators should have their own impact on the system. In another sense, the impact statements describe characteristics, processes, and actions that would be observable and verifiable in a school that effectively implements the standard. The standards, indicators, and impact statements focus on systems within a school and systematic methods of attaining high student performance and organizational effectiveness. The standards and indicators are not isolated, but are systemic.

Accreditation is an ongoing process of meeting standards, continuous improvement, and quality assurance demonstrated through internal and external review. Through the accreditation process, the school staff continuously review the standards and indicators to ensure that the standards are being met and to identify areas that the school may need to strengthen or improve. This review requires the school to identify the data, information, evidence, and documented results that validate that it is meeting each standard.

The following are the Standards, Indicators and the Impact Statements required as good parameters for School Accreditation.

### **STANDARD 1: VISION AND PURPOSE**

The school establishes and communicates a shared purpose and direction for improving the performance of students and the effectiveness of the school.

#### **QUALITY SCHOOL INDICATORS**

*In fulfillment of this standard, the school:*

- ❖ Establishes a vision for the school in collaboration with its stakeholders and communicates the same for better understanding and support.
- ❖ Identifies goals to advance the vision.
- ❖ Develops and continuously maintains a profile of the school, its students, and the community.

- ❖ Ensures that the school's vision and purpose guide the teaching and learning process.
- ❖ Reviews its vision and purpose systematically and revises them when appropriate.

#### **IMPACT STATEMENT**

A school is successful in meeting this standard when it commits to a shared purpose and direction. The school establishes expectations for student learning aligned with the school's vision that is supported by school personnel and external stakeholders (students and parents). These expectations serve as the focus for assessing student performance and school effectiveness. The school's vision guides allocations of time and human, material, and fiscal resources.

### **STANDARD 2: GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP**

The school provides governance and leadership that promote student performance and school effectiveness.

#### **QUALITY SCHOOL INDICATORS**

*In fulfillment of this standard, the school:*

- ❖ Establishes policies and procedures that provide for the effective operation of the school.
- ❖ Recognizes and preserves the executive, administrative, and leadership prerogatives of the administrative head of the school.
- ❖ Ensures compliance with applicable local and state laws, standards and regulations.
- ❖ Employs a system that provides for analysis and review of student performance and school effectiveness.
- ❖ Fosters a learning community.
- ❖ Provides teachers and students opportunities to lead.
- ❖ Provides students and parents meaningful roles in the decision-making process that promote a culture of participation and responsibility.
- ❖ Controls curricular and extracurricular activities that are sponsored by the school.
- ❖ Responds to community expectations and students' and parents' satisfaction.
- ❖ Implements an evaluation system that enhances the professional growth of all personnel.

#### **IMPACT STATEMENT**

A school is successful in meeting this standard when it has leaders who are advocates for the school's vision and

improvement efforts. The leaders provide direction and allocate resources to implement curricular and co-curricular programs that enable students to achieve expectations for their learning. Leaders encourage collaboration and shared responsibility for school improvement among stakeholders. The school's policies, procedures, and organizational conditions ensure equity of learning opportunities and support for innovation.

### **STANDARD 3 : TEACHING AND LEARNING**

The school provides research-based curriculum and instructional methods that facilitate achievement for all students.

#### **QUALITY SCHOOL INDICATORS**

*In fulfillment of this standard, the school:*

- ❖ Develops and implements a curriculum based on clearly-defined expectations for student learning.
- ❖ Promotes active involvement of students in the learning process, including opportunities for them to explore application of higher order thinking skills and investigate new approaches to apply their learning.
- ❖ Gathers, analyzes, and uses data and research in making curricular and instructional choices.
- ❖ Designs and uses instructional strategies, innovations, and activities that are research-based and reflective of best practice.
- ❖ Offers a curriculum that challenges each student to excel, reflects a commitment to equity, and demonstrates an appreciation of diversity.
- ❖ Allocates and protects instructional time to support student learning.
- ❖ Provides for articulation and alignment between and among all levels of schools.
- ❖ Implements interventions to help students meet expectations for student learning.
- ❖ Monitors school climate and takes appropriate steps to ensure that it is conducive to student learning.
- ❖ Provides comprehensive information and media services that support the curricular and instructional programs.
- ❖ Ensures that all students and staff members have regular and ready access to instructional technology and a comprehensive materials collection that supports the curricular and instructional program.

### **IMPACT STATEMENT**

A school is successful in meeting this standard when it implements a curriculum based on clear and measurable expectations for student learning that provides opportunities for all students to acquire requisite knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Teachers use proven instructional practices that actively engage students in the learning process. Teachers provide opportunities for students to apply their knowledge and skills to real world situations. Teachers give students feedback to improve their performance.

### **STANDARD 4: DOCUMENTING AND USING RESULTS**

The school enacts a comprehensive assessment system that monitors and documents performance and uses these results to improve student performance and school effectiveness.

#### **QUALITY SCHOOL INDICATORS**

*In fulfillment of this standard, the school:*

- ❖ Establishes performance measures for student learning that yield information that is reliable, valid, and bias free.
- ❖ Develops and implements a comprehensive assessment system for assessing progress toward meeting the expectations for student learning.
- ❖ Uses student assessment data for making decisions for continuous improvement of teaching and learning processes.
- ❖ Conducts a systematic analysis of instructional and organizational effectiveness and uses the results to improve student performance.
- ❖ Communicates the results of student performance and school effectiveness to all stakeholders.
- ❖ Uses comparison and trend data of student performance from comparable schools in evaluating its effectiveness.
- ❖ Demonstrates verifiable growth in student performance.
- ❖ Maintains a secure, accurate, and complete student record system in accordance with state regulations.

### **IMPACT STATEMENT**

A school is successful in meeting this standard when it uses a comprehensive assessment system based on clearly defined performance measures. The system is used to assess student performance on expectations for student learning, evaluate the effectiveness of curriculum and instruction.

and determine interventions to improve student performance. The assessment system yields timely and accurate information that is meaningful and useful to school leaders, teachers, and other stakeholders in understanding student performance, school effectiveness, and the results of improvement efforts.

#### **STANDARD 5: RESOURCES AND SUPPORT SYSTEMS**

The school has the resources and services necessary to support its vision and purpose and to ensure achievement for all students.

##### **QUALITY SCHOOL INDICATORS**

*In fulfillment of this standard, the school:*

Recruits, employs, and mentors qualified professional staff (i.e., those with professional preparation, ability, knowledge, and experience) that is capable of fulfilling assigned roles and responsibilities.

Ensures that all staff participate in a continuous program of professional development.

Budgets sufficient resources to support its educational programs and to implement its plans for improvement.

Monitors all financial transactions through a recognized, regularly audited accounting system.

Maintains the site, facilities, services and equipments to provide an environment that is safe and orderly for all occupants.

Ensures that each student has access to guidance services that include counseling, mentoring, staff consulting, general, educational and career planning

Provides appropriate support for students with special needs

##### **IMPACT STATEMENT**

A school is successful in meeting this standard when it has sufficient human, material, and fiscal resources to implement a curriculum that enables students to achieve expectations regarding learning, to meet special needs and to comply with applicable regulations. The school employs and allocates staff that are well qualified for their assignments. The school provides ongoing learning opportunities for all the staff to improve their effectiveness. The school ensures compliance with applicable local and state regulations.

#### **STANDARD 6 : COMMUNICATION AND RELATIONSHIPS**

The school fosters effective communication and relationship with and among its stake holders (students, parents and community).

##### **QUALITY SCHOOL INDICATORS**

*In fulfillment of this standard, the school:*

❖ Fosters collaboration with community stakeholders to support student learning.

❖ Has a formal channel to listen to and communicate with stake holders.

❖ Solicits the knowledge and skills of stakeholders to enhance the work of the school

❖ Communicates the expectations for student learning and goals for improvement to all stakeholders.

❖ Provides information about students, their performance, and school effectiveness that is meaningful and useful to stakeholders.

##### **IMPACT STATEMENT**

A school is successful in meeting this standard when it has the understanding, commitment, and support of stakeholders. School personnel seek opportunities for collaboration and shared leadership among stakeholders to help students learn and advance improvement efforts.

#### **STANDARD 7: COMMITMENT TO CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT**

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

##### **QUALITY SCHOOL INDICATORS**

*In fulfillment of this standard, the school:*

❖ Engages in a continuous process of improvement that articulates the vision and purpose the school is pursuing (Vision); maintains a rich and current description of students, their performance, school effectiveness and the school community (Profile); employs goals and interventions to improve student performance (Plan); and documents and uses the results to inform what happens next (Results).

❖ Engages stakeholders in the processes of continuous improvement.

❖ Ensures that plans for continuous improvement are aligned with the vision and purpose of the school and expectations for student learning.

❖ Provides professional development for school personnel

to help them implement improvement interventions to achieve improvement goals.

❖ Monitors and communicates the results of improvement efforts to stakeholders.

❖ Evaluates and documents the effectiveness and impact of its continuous process of improvement.

### IMPACT STATEMENT

A school is successful in meeting this standard when it implements a collaborative and ongoing process for improvement that aligns the functions of the school with the expectations for student learning. Improvement efforts are sustained and the school demonstrates progress in improving student performance and school effectiveness. New improvement efforts are informed by the results of earlier efforts through reflection and assessment of the improvement process.

The seven Accreditation Standards for Quality Schools are represented in each of the three core tasks such as: Ensure desired results, Improve teaching and learning and Foster a culture of improvement.

### ORGANIZATIONAL CONDITIONS

Apart from the above standards, it is essential to have good "organizational conditions" within a school system that contributes to improved student achievement.

❖ *Quality Teachers* - the recruitment, placement, and professional development of teachers to achieve the school's vision of student learning.

❖ *Effective Leadership* - the leader's decisions and actions to support the vision of student learning.

❖ *Quality Information* - the collection, management, and use of information to enable the school or school district make informed decisions, take specific actions, and assess the results of improvement efforts that support the school's vision of student learning.

❖ *Policies and Procedures that Foster and Sustain Improvement* - the school's development and implementation of policies and procedures that support improvement efforts.

❖ *Resources and Support Systems to Sustain Improvement* - the allocation and deployment of human, technology, and material resources to target areas for improvement.

All five organizational conditions should be embodied in the Accreditation Standards for Quality Schools.

In short, the Characteristics of an Accredited School are

- It is *devoted to a mission*. It has a clear understanding of what the results of its program should be for students.
- It is *student-oriented*. Its goals must express what it does for the whole student.
- It *knows itself*. The school operates from an examined vision of service to students, family and community.
- It is *self-correcting*. An accredited school demonstrates a capacity to control its own quality.
- It *keeps its promises*. An accredited school delivers the programs and services that it advertises.
- It *accepts objective evaluation*. Outside evaluators who have no prior involvement with the school or its sponsoring authority provide periodic evaluation.
- It *plans for its future*. An accredited school continuously has plans that include strategies for improving its quality.
- It *examines student success*. Accredited schools obtain and analyze objective evidence on student growth and press for higher levels of learning for all students.
- It *participates in the responsibilities of the academic profession*. An accredited school participates in the self-renewing activity of evaluation and accreditation.
- It is *recognized*. It cares enough about what it does to seek verification by a recognized accreditation authority.

### CONCLUSION

Accredited schools are committed to being better today than they were yesterday. This commitment to continuous improvement is demonstrated by the school's adherence to the standards and the implementation of a quality improvement process that yields results for students. Also, knowledge about those standards and indicators enlarges the vision of looking at institutions of higher education. Standards, indicators and the impact statements enable one to analyze the institutional performance better. Shared perception of all the stakeholders gives the direction to progress and development. Thus, awareness of performance indicator enables all the parties of the educational system to have a suitable focus for education. Performance is reality. Assessment of performance through indicators is an actuality.

### REFERENCES

- 1) *Advanced Accreditation Standards for Quality School* - <http://www.advanced.org>.
- 2) *Uday Chande, S. 'Performance Indicators of an Institute of Higher Education'* - <http://www.performance/indicators/schools.htm>.