

The South Carolina Independent School Association



Accreditation Packet

3-Year Cycle
Revised June 2023

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INTRODUCTION TO SCISA ACCREDITATION

The SCISA Accreditation process is a systematic, systemic, and sustainable approach to improving student performance over time based on meeting Standards, engaging in continuous improvement, and implementing quality assurance.

SCISA Accreditation is a researched-based framework that supports the process of accreditation; provides a means to engage in continuous improvement; and involves the entire school community in a continuous process of self-evaluation, reflection, and improvement. The process invites external scrutiny and welcomes constructive feedback from peers. The process demands rigor, is based in data and approaches documentation of results from educational best practices.

SCISA Accreditation is a powerful approach to improving learning, growth, and development of students as well as organizational effectiveness. SCISA Accreditation recognizes that supporting children in their learning, growth and development is a result of how well all the parts of the education system work together to meet the needs of children. SCISA Accreditation is used by schools from across South Carolina and Georgia.

SCISA member schools ensure that SCISA Assurances and Accreditation Standards are followed. Affiliate schools must seek accreditation within 18 months of being approved for membership by the Board of Directors.

SCISA Basic Accreditation requires a one-day visit by two (enrollment under 400 students) SCISA representatives, or three (enrollment over 400 students) SCISA representatives. The school will be asked to choose 3 preference dates for the accreditation visit and the exact date will be confirmed.

The school will complete a packet to be uploaded to the school's SCISA Community page at least 2 weeks prior to the visit. The uploaded documentation consists of the following 5 items:

1. A completed **SELF STUDY REPORT** covering 13 subjects (only 12 for Initial Accreditation)
2. A completed **INTERNAL REVIEW DIAGNOSTIC** covering 32 indicators
3. The school's Long-Range Plan (see item L of the Standards)
4. The school's current **ANNUAL REPORT**
5. The school's most current **STANDARDIZED TESTS**

Complete instructions are included in this packet along with other requirements for a successful visit.

South Carolina Independent School Association

Accreditation Cost Checklist



SCISA Three-Year Accreditation

- Visited by an External Review Team (ERT) every three (3) years
- One (1) day visit
- The External Review Team (ERT) will consist of Three (3) or four (4) members
- Cost to School: \$1000 accreditation fee plus mileage of the ERT members
- The visited school will receive an invoice from SCISA for the accreditation fee and the ERT members' mileage.
- The school is also responsible for lunch, snacks, and drinks for the ERT members.

South Carolina Independent School Association Assurances

Administrator Qualification

1. Employ a school administrator with at least a bachelor's degree who does not teach more than two of the following: Two periods a day or coach two varsity athletic teams, or one of each. An assistant administrator, who teaches less than a full load, is required in schools over 250 enrollment.

Teacher Qualification

2. The school employs teachers in graded K-5 – 12 whose academic training, experience, or combination of same, fully indicate the professional ability, insight, and enthusiasm necessary to complete classroom assignments satisfactorily. Each teacher in grades K-5 – 12 has a minimum of a state certificate and/or a bachelor's degree. A transcript designated by the issuing school as official must be available for each teacher. A student copy or a copy of a copied transcript is not acceptable unless a state certificate is also on file in a fire-proof cabinet. In addition to a transcript, teacher's, administrator's, and staff files must include a School Employee Evaluation for Tuberculosis, an I-9 Form for all employees hired after November 6, 1986, an E-verify, verification of Blood-borne Pathogens Training, and Emergency Action Plan (EAP) training. Blood-borne pathogens training and EAP training is required for ALL school employees. (Employee is defined as anyone in direct contact with your students.)

Emergency Action Plan

3. The school has a site-specific Emergency Action Plan (EAP).

Resource Requirements

4. The school provides an on-campus, centralized (inventoried & controlled) access to sufficient library books, technological and other resources, to supplement and enrich the total school program emphasizing instruction in research skills.

Student Records

5. The school keeps adequate permanent records on students stored electronically and housed off site, or in a fire-proof cabinet. Student records must include a SC Certificate of Immunization, a current valid transcript, and a SCISAA Parent's Permission form, a SCISAA Medical Form (doctor's certificate), and a signed Warning of Inherent Risk form for athletic members.

Standardized Testing

6. The school provides an adequate guidance service including annual use of nationally recognized achievement tests to validate local evaluation and to determine proper placement. The school administers achievement tests to four grades each year and I.Q. tests to three grades each year through a nationally recognized testing service. In addition, PSATs must be given in the 10th or 11th grade.

School Calendar

7. The school operates no less than five and one-half hours a day for 180 days (gross) per year. This is defined as no less than 175 student school days per session with only three half-day exam days each semester being allowed to count toward the total number of days as a full day. Gross days are defined as student days plus faculty in-service days. One-unit courses meet five days per week for a minimum of 45 minutes each period or the equivalent.

Laboratory Facilities

8. The school has adequate laboratory facilities to support the curriculum of the school. These regulations require that the lab include eye wash, safety shower, ventilation, gas and water cut-offs located inside the lab, two fire extinguishers, and safe storage for flammable substances. Physical facilities meet the applicable federal, state, and local safety, fire, and health regulations. The grounds provide areas for physical education and recreation and the building is maintained to provide a safe, sanitary, and attractive environment for learning.

Long Range Plan

9. The school has LONG-RANGE PLAN which includes each of the following:

- A three- to five-year outlook for the school.
- A statement of the enrollment goals of the school.
- A statement of the budget and salary goals of the school.
- A plan and demonstration of consistency between the school's Mission Statement and the Long-Range Plan.
- A plan and demonstration of consistency between the school's Curriculum and Long-Range Plan.
- Input from the broad school constituency concerning these listed items.

Safety Audit

10. The school will perform an annual safety audit.

Teacher Professional Development Training

11. The school requires that all teaching faculty must attend the SCISA Teachers' Conference within the school's respective 3-year accreditation cycle.

Mandatory Accreditation Training

12. The school is required to attend mandatory accreditation training within 18 months of the scheduled visit.

REQUIREMENTS FOR AN ACCREDITED SCHOOL

I. An accredited independent elementary school must employ qualified (defined II, B) teachers and other necessary staff personnel, maintain a proper pupil-teacher ratio (defined II G), use a course of study appropriate to its pupils, adopt adequate textbooks approved by appropriate personnel or by a committee on standards representing the SCISA, provide adequate library services and adequate guidance services including annual use of nationally recognized tests to validate local evaluation and to determine proper placement.

II. An accredited independent secondary school must meet the minimum standards set by the SCISA. To be accredited, an independent secondary school must:

A. Employ a school administrator with at least a bachelor's degree who does not teach more than two of the following: Two periods a day or coach two varsity athletic teams, or one of each. An assistant administrator, who teaches less than a full load, is required in schools over 250 enrollment.

B. Employ teachers in grades K5 (hired after January 1994) through 12 whose academic training, experience, or combination of same, fully indicate the professional ability, insight, and enthusiasm necessary to complete classroom assignments satisfactorily. Each teacher in grades K5 through 12 must have a minimum of a state certificate and/or bachelor's degree.

C. Employ a sufficient number of such teachers to sustain a curriculum that shall include one or both of the following:

GENERAL DIPLOMA REQUIREMENTS:

Subject Units

* English:	4
* Mathematics:	3
* Science:	3
* Social Studies (One of these must be a unit in American History):	3
* Physical Education (PE)	1
* Computer Science	1
Electives:	9
* Two units of the same foreign language may be substituted for two of the following three units: One unit of science, one unit of mathematics, or one unit of social studies.	

COLLEGE PREPARATORY DIPLOMA REQUIREMENTS:

Subject Units

English:	4
Mathematics (Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II):	4
Science (Phys. Science, Biology, Chemistry, or Physics, I and/or):	4
Social Studies (American Hist., World Hist., Govt. /Econ. 1/2 each):	3
Foreign Language (Two units of the same language):	2
Physical Education:	1
Computer Science	1
Electives:	8

Appropriate research experiences should be included in the curriculum.

These may apply to one "track" of a high school with more than one curriculum or to a high school as a whole. If only part of the school is meeting these, the administration must be sure the Board, pupils, and parents are aware of which pupils are in which "track," and the school's diploma should indicate the distinction.

A school chartered for diagnosed learning disabilities may receive special consideration in the areas of course requirements and grade level promotion.

Levels in each curriculum as applicable to each individual member school:

FOR ADVANCEMENT TO:	GENERAL DIPLOMA	COLLEGE PREPARATORY
Sophomore (grade 10)	6 units	6 units
Junior (grade 11)	12 units	12 units
Senior (grade 12)	18 units	18 units
Graduation	24 units	27 units

Each member school shall determine eligibility for grade placement according to entrance tests, past records, and the needs of each individual student.

D. Operate the school no fewer than 5 1/2 hours per day for a minimum of 180 school days (gross) per year. This is defined as no less than 175 student school days per session with only three half-day exam days each semester being allowed to count toward the total number of days as a full day. Gross days are defined as student days plus faculty in-service days. One-unit courses meet five days per week for a minimum of 45 minutes each period or the equivalent.

E. Provide an on-campus, centralized (inventoried and controlled) access to sufficient library books, technological and other resources, to supplement and enrich the total school program emphasizing instruction in research skills. Complete library standards are included in accreditation standard packets. Note: Use of off-campus research facilities is encouraged, but this should not take the place of the on-campus facility.

F. Provide adequate guidance services including annual use of nationally recognized achievement tests to validate local evaluation and to determine proper placement. Administer achievement tests to four grades each year and I.Q. tests to at least three grades each year through the SCISA testing program. In addition, P.S.A.T.'s must be given in the 10th or 11th grade.

G. Realize that though the SCISA strongly recommends a maximum class size of 25 pupils per class, schools may increase this number to 28 per class. Any increase above 28 requires action of the school's Board of Directors and must be documented and be available to the SCISA upon request.

H. Keep adequate permanent records on teachers and pupils, including current valid transcripts on all teachers and pupils. An official transcript or copy of the official transcript showing the college seal is required on teachers and administrators.

I. Schools must make provisions for annual faculty development.

J. Administrators and/or school representatives must attend at least one headmasters' meeting (November or March) each year and are encouraged to attend workshops and take graduate courses.

K. Have curriculum guides which provide a detailed description of the curriculum of the school available for inspection by the visiting team.

L. A school must have a LONG-RANGE PLAN. The Long-Range Plan must include all of the following elements:

1. A three-to-five-year outlook for the school.
2. A statement of the enrollment goals of the school.
3. A statement of the budget and salary goals of the school.
4. A plan and demonstration of consistency between the school's Mission Statement and the Long-Range Plan.
5. A plan and demonstration of consistency between the school's Curriculum and the Long-Range Plan.
6. Input from the broad school constituency concerning these listed items.

III. A school's physical facilities must meet the applicable federal, state, and local safety, fire, and *health (*definition: including immunizations, School Employee Evaluation For Tuberculosis, and Blood borne Pathogens) regulations. In laboratories these regulations require that the laboratory include eye wash, safety shower, ventilation, gas and water cut-offs located inside the laboratory, two fire extinguishers, and safe storage for flammable substances. The grounds shall provide areas for physical education and recreation and the building shall be maintained to provide a safe, sanitary, and attractive environment for learning.

IV.

A. A school is normally accredited for three years. However, the visiting committee may recommend either of two one-year periods of accreditation when it feels the circumstances warrant, including but not limited to, frequent faculty, administration, or trustee turnover and/or a sharp decline in student enrollment.

B. Provisional Accreditation is a one-year accreditation of a school that is not currently accredited and meets many of the requirements but needs to improve in certain areas without undue delay. Though this will be most frequently used for schools never before accredited, it may be used for schools which have lost accreditation.

C. Probational Accreditation is a one-year extension of a currently held full accreditation when the school does not merit a renewal of accreditation for the full three-year term.

D. Effective July 1, 1995, the maximum length of time a school may hold provisional or probational accreditation shall be two years.

E. Each time a school is visited, a \$1000 accreditation fee will be required in advance. A fee of \$100 will be required if an additional on-site visit is required for the school to complete the accreditation requirements or to verify that any deficiencies have been satisfied.

F. The accreditation of any school may be temporarily suspended by the Accreditation Committee, after the Committee's review, if it appears that the school may not be meeting all accreditation standards.

G. Initial Accreditation becomes effective at the Board meeting at which it is approved. Basic and Advanced accreditation becomes effective July 1 and expires on June 30.

Last revised and adopted March, 2019

LIBRARY STANDARDS

(Please use this copy as a guide for evaluating the library)

The South Carolina Independent School Association Accreditation Standards for Media Centers and Libraries will consist of the three specific categories: On-Site Traditional Library, Off-Site Library, and Virtual Library.

ON-SITE TRADITIONAL LIBRARY REQUIREMENTS:

Facilities

- The library shall be in a designated room(s) on campus.
- The library or combination library-study hall designated room must be equipped with tables, chairs, bookshelves, magazine rack, circulation desk and other equipment commensurate with the size of the school.

Books

- The library shall have a minimum of 2000 usable and acceptable books or an average of 10 books per student, whichever is greater.
- These shall be books exclusive of government documents, multiple texts, and pamphlets.
- The collection should be well-balanced and systematically selected for a wide coverage of subjects.
- The elementary library should not contain more than two-thirds of its titles in fiction, and the high school should not contain more than one-third of its titles in fiction.

Reference Materials

- Each school library shall provide a well-rounded collection of basic reference materials needed to satisfy curricular requirements and stimulate intellectual development of students. Reference materials can be either in hard copy form or in electronic form.

Periodicals

- Each school library shall provide an interesting and useful collection of current periodicals to accommodate needs for current information and appeal to personal interests of students. Periodicals and publications can be either in hard copy form or in electronic form.

Professional Materials

- Each library shall provide a central collection of easily accessible professional materials for teachers to keep abreast of trends, developments, research, and techniques both in general and specialized areas of education. Professional materials can be either in hard copy form or in electronic form.

Newspapers

- Each library shall provide a daily newspaper that provides coverage of local, state, and national news. Daily newspapers can be either in hard copy form or in electronic form.

Technology

- Each library shall provide internet access. It is recommended that all students be exposed to automated library systems.
- Each library must have and maintain a DISCUS subscription.

Librarian

- A school shall have a teacher assigned to the library.
- A secondary school shall have a teacher assigned who has library training through SCISA or through an approved mentor program.

OFF-SITE LIBRARY REQUIREMENTS:

Facilities

- The Off-Site Library must be a “public library” facility that is funded by local, county, or state government.
- The library must be within close or walking proximity of the school.
- The use of an Off-Site Library must be approved in writing by SCISA officials.
- All Off-Site Library usage must be approved in advance of an accreditation visit by SCISA officials.

Books

- Off-Site Libraries must shall have a minimum of 2000 usable and acceptable books or an average of 10 books per student, whichever is greater.
- Off-Site Libraries must have books exclusive of government documents, multiple texts, and pamphlets.
- Off-Site Libraries must have a collection that is well-balanced and systematically selected for a wide coverage of subjects.
- Off-Site Libraries for the elementary section should not contain more than two-thirds of its titles in fiction, and the high school section should not contain more than one-third of its titles in fiction.

Reference Materials

- Off-Site Libraries shall provide a well-rounded collection of basic reference materials needed to satisfy curricular requirements and stimulate intellectual development of students. Reference materials can be either in hard copy form or in electronic form.

Periodicals

- Off-Site Libraries shall provide an interesting and useful collection of current periodicals to accommodate needs for current information and appeal to personal interests of students. Periodicals and publications can be either in hard copy form or in electronic form.

Professional Materials

- Off-Site Libraries shall provide a central collection of easily accessible professional materials for teachers to keep abreast of trends, developments, research, and techniques both in general and specialized areas of education. Professional materials can be either in hard copy form or in electronic form.

Newspapers

- Off-Site Libraries shall provide a daily newspaper that provides coverage of local, state, and national news. Daily newspapers can be either in hard copy form or in electronic form.

Technology

- Off-Site Libraries shall provide internet access. It is recommended that all students be exposed to automated library systems.
- Off-Site Libraries must have and maintain a DISCUS subscription.

Librarian

- A school shall have a teacher assigned to conduct off-site library academic and instructional responsibilities.
- A secondary school shall have a teacher assigned who has library training through SCISA or through an approved mentor program.

VIRTUAL LIBRARY REQUIREMENTS:

Facilities

- A Virtual Library shall be in a designated room(s) on the school campus.
- The Virtual Library or combination virtual library-study hall designated room must be equipped with tables, chairs, computers, iPads, tablets, or other electronic devices that can be used by students to access electronic reading and library platforms.
- A specifically designated set of electronic devices must be available in the school's virtual library at all times.
- A multitude of charging ports must be in functional and accessible to support the electronic demands of the virtual library.

Reference Materials

- Virtual Libraries shall provide an electron subscription or portal for a well-rounded collection of basic reference materials needed to satisfy curricular requirements and stimulate intellectual development of students. Reference materials can be either in hard copy form or in electronic form.

Periodicals

- Virtual Libraries shall provide an electronic subscription or portal for interesting and useful collection of current periodicals to accommodate needs for current information and appeal to personal interests of students.

Professional Materials

- Virtual Libraries shall provide an electronic subscription or portal for the collection of easily accessible professional materials for teachers to keep abreast of trends, developments, research, and techniques both in general and specialized areas of education.

Newspapers

- Virtual Libraries shall provide an electronic subscription or portal for a daily newspaper that provides coverage of local, state, and national news.

Technology

- Virtual Libraries shall provide both wireless and hard-wired internet access. It is recommended that all students be exposed to automated library systems.
- Virtual Libraries must have and maintain an active DISCUS subscription.

Librarian

- The school shall have a teacher assigned to conduct virtual library academic and instructional responsibilities.
- A secondary school shall have a teacher assigned who has virtual library training through SCISA or through an approved mentor program.

ACCREDITATION TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

BOOKS – The library shall have a minimum of 2000 usable and acceptable books or an average of 10 books per student, whichever is greater. These shall be books exclusive of government documents, multiple texts, and pamphlets. The collection should be well-balanced and systematically selected for a wide coverage of subjects. The elementary library should not contain more than two-thirds of its titles in fiction, and the high school should not contain more than one-third of its titles in fiction.

NOTE: Titles on CD Rom, computer software, or the internet may be substituted for hard bound books.

REFERENCE MATERIALS – Each school library shall provide a well-rounded collection of basic reference materials needed to satisfy curricular requirements and stimulate intellectual development of students. The collection shall include a current encyclopedia set, an unabridged dictionary, a foreign language and geographical dictionary, a thesaurus, a current atlas and almanac, literary criticisms, and biographies.

MAGAZINES – Each school library shall provide an interesting and useful collection of current periodicals to accommodate needs for current information and appeal to personal interests of students.

PROFESSIONAL MATERIALS – Each library shall provide a central collection of easily accessible professional materials for teachers to keep abreast of trends, developments, research, and techniques both in general and specialized areas of education.

NEWSPAPERS – Each library shall provide a daily newspaper that provides coverage of local, state, and national news.

TECHNOLOGY – Each library shall provide internet access. It is recommended that all students be exposed to automated library systems.

LIBRARIAN – A school shall have a teacher assigned to the library. A secondary school shall have a teacher assigned who has library training through SCISA or through an approved mentor program.

FACILITIES – All schools shall provide a separate library or combination library-study hall equipped with tables, chairs, bookshelves, magazine rack, circulation desk and other equipment commensurate with the size of the school.

ACCREDITATION MATERIALS

**Upload to the SCISA Community
At least two (2) weeks before the visit**

1. SELF-STUDY REPORT

Complete the SCISA ACCREDITATION SELF-STUDY QUESTIONS

2. INTERNAL REVIEW DIAGNOSTIC

Complete the Internal Review Diagnostic by assigning a score to each indicator that reflects the school's compliance.

3. LONG RANGE PLAN

Using the REQUIREMENTS FOR AN ACCREDITED SCHOOL (Item L), produce a document which contains all 6 of the specific elements.

4. CURRENT SCISA ANNUAL REPORT

5. STANDARDIZED TESTS

Your school's most current MASTER LIST SUMMARY page for each grade tested. Also provide PSAT scores/documents for students tested in the 10th or 11th grade.

****Upload each numbered item separately at least Two (2) weeks before your on-site visit.**

ACCREDITATION SELF-STUDY QUESTIONS

The benefits of the self-study are two-fold:

1. To promote the Board, the Headmaster, and Faculty to enter into a Self-study.
2. To acquaint the Visitation Team with the operations of the school in advance of their visit.

Organize and create the self-study report using the following format:

1. Make a cover page. Include the school's name and address, headmaster's name, assistant headmaster's and any other administrators name (s), and date of the report.
2. Use a **separate page** to answer each of the numbered questions. First, **restate the questions**, and then follow with the answer.

PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING:

1. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE:

- a) What does the school conceive its mission to be? E.g., solely college preparatory? Primarily college preparatory? General?
- b) If the mission includes preparation of non-college students, what special curriculum and career guidance does the school have for those students?
- c) State the school's Athletic Philosophy. (for athletic member schools)

2. ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION

- a) What is the composition of the Board of Directors?
- b) Is there a clear-cut separation of authority and duties between the Board and the Headmaster?
- c) Does the Headmaster attend all or part of the meetings of the Board?
- d) Is there an Assistant Headmaster? If so, what are his/her duties and responsibilities?

3. EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM (As the answers to this section differ from grade to grade, please indicate which grades to which you are referring)

- a) By whom and through what process is the content of the curriculum chosen? Is this content in writing?
- b) What are the mechanics and philosophy of textbook selection? Do textbooks determine the curriculum?
- c) Are entrance tests required? How are the results used?
- d) If the school has a heterogeneous population, what special provisions are made for the different academic levels and needs of the pupils?

4. FINANCIAL RESOURCES

- a) Is there an external audit of the previous year's operation? Please include it.
- b) Is there a line-item budget for the current year's operation? Please include it.
- c) Is there an adequate bookkeeping system for the posting of all income and expenditures? Briefly describe it.
- d) How is purchasing accomplished? Who signs checks? Is there an internal audit?

5. FACULTY

- a) How are faculty members recruited, interviewed, and hired?
- b) Is there an official transcript, I-9 form (for all employees hired after November 6, 1989), E-Verify, School Employee Evaluation for Tuberculosis, verification of annual Blood-borne Pathogens Training, and EAP Training on file for every faculty member?
- c) Are teaching workloads equitable?

6. LIBRARY

- a) What are the library holdings, including audio-visual equipment? List periodicals and the dates of major reference materials.
- b) Provide documentation of a budget line-item for library acquisitions and audio-visual equipment. (REQUIRED).
- c) Is the librarian trained?
- d) What services does the library offer to the students? To the teachers?

7. STUDENT SERVICES

- a) Are counseling and guidance services offered, particularly for the upper level, college-bound students?
- b) How is discipline maintained?
- c) Are entrance and achievement tests administered? Are the results analyzed?
- d) How are student records maintained?
- e) How are health records maintained?

8. PHYSICAL PLANT

- a) Is there a floor plan available? If so, please include.
- b) Is there a regular maintenance plan?
- c) Is there an annual Safety Audit? (REQUIRED) A copy must be provided for the visiting team on the day of your visit. (REQUIRED)

9. PROJECTIONS

- a) What is the assessment of the school's viability? It's future financial strength? Turnover and retention rates of teachers? Enrollment predictions?

- b) What should be done to strengthen the school's viability.

10. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- a) Describe your procedures for ensuring faculty development for your school.
- b) Complete the attached Professional Development Checklist including both formal and informal professional development.
- c) All teaching faculty must attend the Annual Teachers' Conference within the schools respective 3-5 year accreditation cycle. Proof of attendance is required.

11. SCHOOL CALENDAR

- a) Attach the school calendar for the current year.
- b) Compile the number of gross days represented on the calendar (Item II D).
- c) Define a half day at your school.
- d) List the total number of half days in your school calendar.
- e) For what purposes do you schedule a half school day?

12. INTERNAL REVIEW DIAGNOSTIC (See page 21) 5 Standards with 36 indicators

- a) Assign a rank for each indicator based upon the school's evidences.
- b) The rank should be based on compliance of those evidences.
- c) Provide a narrative summary of your findings.
- d) Ranking Qualifications:
 - 4 = 75% compliance of evidence or greater.
 - 3 = 50% to 75% compliance of evidence.
 - 2 = 25% to 50% compliance of evidence.
 - 1 = 0% to 25% compliance of evidence.
 - NA = Not Applicable.

13. PREVIOUS VISIT (Does not apply to initial accreditation)

- a) Provide a list of progress made on recommendations and/or deficiencies written by the visitation committee on your last visit.



Standards Development

SCISA is committed to the care and education of all students within our association. In that regard, SCISA employs a research and performance-based protocol for all schools that commits to the care, education, learning, growth, and development of children. SCISA holds its accredited schools accountable to high quality educational standards and results supported by an engagement of continuous improvement.

SCISA Standards for Quality Schools

The SCISA Standards for Quality Schools provide the foundation for the SCISA Accreditation Process. The Standards also represent the continued evolution of accreditation as a powerful tool for driving effective practices in support of students. The SCISA Standards for Quality Schools are comprised of Standards, Indicators and Criteria. The Standards are research-based, comprehensive quality statements that describe conditions that are necessary for schools to achieve organizational effectiveness and ensure children learn. These Standards support an education process that is truly visionary; characterizing how schools should operate to promote a culture of continuous learning that is fluid – engaging leaders, staff and parents. The Indicators are operational definitions or descriptions of exemplary practices and processes, together providing a comprehensive picture of each Standard.

Key Educational Concepts in Standards

1. All schools commit to rigor, equity, student engagement and depth and application of knowledge.
2. All schools commit to developmentally appropriate cognitive, emotional, social, creative, and physical growth and development, as well as shared values and beliefs about teaching, learning, development and care for children.
3. The school improvement plan requires identification of goals for improvement of achievement and instruction.
4. The governing body operates consistent with established roles and responsibilities and must be ethical and free of conflict of interest.
5. Teachers participate in collaborative learning communities.

6. All schools have formal structures whereby each student is well known.
7. Curriculum, instruction and assessment are adjusted in response to data about each student's readiness for the next level.
8. Professional and support staff members are trained in evaluation, interpretation and use of data.
9. Schools must demonstrate, using data, growth in student learning, student readiness for the next level and student success at the next level.

Standards for the Future

Through our own commitment to improvement, SCISA revises its Standards to ensure that they remain relevant and current as the foundation of the SCISA Accreditation Process. There are very practical reasons to review the Standards – our knowledge of effective practices changes, and research reveals new information about factors that contribute to student achievement and the learning, growth and development of children.

However, revising the Standards also opens the door to considering future trends in education and SCISA's own research and findings from the institution visits at the nearly 65 accredited schools that we have conducted over the last 5 years. Feedback from the field also provided rich experiences and expertise that allows us to look at creating Standards for the future, not just today.

This rich and deep revision process produced a set of Standards that will challenge schools to commit to the care and educational well-being of children, to reach higher, to examine closer and to demonstrate the fidelity and integrity of best practices. The Standards for Quality Schools significantly increase the focus on teaching and learning; incorporate 21st Century Skills; embed high expectations for professional practice; and focus on developmentally appropriate cognitive, emotional, social, creative, and physical growth and development, as well as shared values and beliefs about teaching, learning, development, and care for children.

SCISA Standards for Quality Schools

Standard 1: Philosophy, Mission, and Vision

The school has a specific written statement that clearly outlines the organization's mission and purpose. The educational constructs that are communicated within the statement must actively engage all areas of school life and every member of the school's constituency.

Standard 2: Governance and Leadership

The school operates under a leadership and governance model that is dedicated to the support of an active learning environment, the development growth of children; parental and family involvement, and the effectiveness of the entire school program.

Standard 3: Learning Environment and Instruction

Learning Environment and Instruction. The school's academic curriculum, instructional methodology, and assessment practices guide and ensure teacher effectiveness while promoting student-centered success.

Standard 4: Facilities and Resources

The school program has facilities and resources that provides adequate services that support its mission and purpose to ensure success for all children.

Standard 5: Data Analysis for Student Growth

The school uses data relative to the cognitive functions of its students to determine the overall effectiveness of the school academic program. The data accumulated through this practice provides a platform to implement and design a curriculum that targets both individual student growth and continuous organizational improvement.

HOW TO SCORE THE INTERNAL REVIEW DIAGNOSTIC

- a) Assign a rank for each indicator based upon the school's evidences.
- b) The rank should be based on compliance of those evidences.
- c) Ranking Qualifications:
 - 4 = 75% compliance of evidence or greater.
 - 3 = 50% to 75% compliance of evidence.
 - 2 = 25% to 50% compliance of evidence.
 - 1 = 0% to 25% compliance of evidence.

Standard 1: Mission and Purpose. The school has a specific written statement that clearly outlines the organization’s mission and purpose. The educational constructs that are communicated within the statement must actively engage all areas of school life and every member of the school’s constituency.

Indicator Number	Indicator	Review Ranking
1.1	The school creates written mission and vision statements with input from stakeholder groups.	
1.2	The school publishes a written non-discrimination policy that addresses race, color, religion, sex (including gender identity, sexual orientation, and pregnancy), national origin, age (40 or older), socio-economic level, physical ability or genetic information, and learning style.	
1.3	The school develops and updates a demographic profile of the school, its students and faculty/staff, and the community.	
1.4	The school communicates the mission and vision to build stakeholder understanding and support.	
1.5	The school reviews the school’s mission and vision annually to ensure alignment with its educational goals and philosophy.	
1.6	The school has created and continues to foster a program, culture, and inclusive community of students, families, faculty and staff, and governing body (if applicable), that embraces diverse perspectives, cultures, backgrounds, and identities.	

Standard 2: Leadership and Governance. The school operates under a leadership and governance model that is dedicated to the support of an active learning environment, the development growth of children; parental and family involvement, and the effectiveness of the entire school program.

Indicator Number	Indicator	Review Ranking
2.1	The governing body establishes policies and supports practices that ensure effective administration of the school.	

2.2	The governing body operates responsibly and functions effectively.	
2.3	The governing body ensures that the school leadership has the autonomy to meet goals for achievement and instruction and to manage day-to-day operations effectively.	
2.4	Leadership and staff foster a culture consistent with the school's purpose and direction.	
2.5	Leadership engages stakeholders effectively in support of the school's purpose and direction.	
2.6	Leadership and staff supervision and evaluation processes result in improved professional practice and student success	

Standard 3: Learning Environment and Instruction. The school's academic curriculum, instructional methodology, and assessment practices guide and ensure teacher effectiveness while promoting student-centered success.

Indicator Number	Indicator	Review Ranking
3.1	The school's curriculum provides equitable and challenging learning experiences that ensure all students have sufficient opportunities to develop learning, thinking, and life skills that lead to success at the next level.	
3.2	Curriculum, instruction, and assessment are monitored and adjusted systematically in response to data from multiple assessments of student learning and an examination of professional practice.	
3.3	Teachers engage students in their learning through instructional strategies that ensure achievement of learning expectations.	
3.4	School leaders monitor and support the improvement of instructional practices of teachers to ensure student success.	
3.5	Teachers participate in collaborative learning communities to improve instruction and student learning.	
3.6	Teachers implement the school's instructional process in support of student learning.	

3.7	Mentoring, coaching, and induction programs support instructional improvement consistent with the school's values and beliefs about teaching and learning.	
3.8	The school engages families in meaningful ways in their children's education and keeps them informed of their children's learning progress.	
3.9	The school has a formal structure whereby each student is well known by at least one adult advocate in the school who supports that student's educational experience.	
3.10	Grading and reporting are based on clearly defined criteria that represent the attainment of content knowledge and skills and are consistent across grade levels and courses.	
3.11	All staff members participate in a continuous program of professional learning.	
3.12	The school provides and coordinates learning support services to meet the unique learning needs of students.	

Standard 4: Facilities and Resources. The school program has facilities and resources that provides adequate services that support its mission and purpose to ensure success for all children.

Indicator Number	Indicator	Review Ranking
4.1	Qualified professional and support staff are sufficient in number to fulfill their roles and responsibilities necessary to support the school's purpose, direction, and the educational program.	
4.2	Instructional time, material resources, and fiscal resources are sufficient to support the purpose and direction of the school.	
4.3	The school maintains facilities, services, and equipment to provide a safe, clean, and healthy environment for all students and staff.	
4.4	Students and school personnel use a range of media and information resources to support the school's educational programs.	
4.5	The technology infrastructure supports the school's teaching, learning, and operational needs.	
4.6	The school provides support services to meet the physical, social, and emotional needs of the student population being served.	

4.7	The school provides services that support the counseling, assessment, referral, educational, and career planning needs of all students.	
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Standard 5: Data Analysis for Student Growth. The school uses data relative to the cognitive functions of its students to determine the overall effectiveness of the school academic program. The data accumulated through this practice provides a platform to implement and design a curriculum that targets both individual student growth and continuous organizational improvement.

Indicator Number	Indicator	Review Ranking
5.1	The school establishes and maintains a clearly defined and comprehensive student assessment system.	
5.2	Professional and support staff continuously collect, analyze, and apply learning from a range of data sources, including comparison and trend data about student learning, instruction, program evaluation, and organizational conditions.	
5.3	Professional and support staff are trained in the evaluation, interpretation, and use of data.	
5.4	The school engages in a continuous process to determine verifiable improvement in student learning, including readiness for and success at the next level.	
5.5	Leadership monitors and communicates comprehensive information about student learning, conditions that support student learning, and the achievement of school improvement goals to stakeholders.	

ACCREDITATION CHECKLIST

***To be completed by the Lead Evaluator of the ERT**

SCHOOL _____ DATE _____

Please mark one of the boxes under each statement. A mark of unacceptable requires an explanation in the space provided for comments.

1. The school administrator has at least: (a bachelor's degree for basic) and (a master's degree for advanced) and does not teach more than two periods a day or coach two varsity athletic teams, or one of each. An assistant administrator who teaches less than a full load is required in schools with over 250 enrolled.

ACCEPTABLE _____ UNACCEPTABLE _____

Comments:

2. The school employs teacher in graded K-5 – 12 whose academic training, experience or combination of same, fully indicate the professional ability, insight, and enthusiasm necessary to complete classroom assignments satisfactorily. Each teacher in grades K-5 – 12 has a minimum of a state certificate and/or a bachelor's degree. A transcript designated by the issuing school as official must be available for each teacher. A student copy or a copy of a copied transcript is not acceptable unless a state certificate is also on file in a fire-proof cabinet. In addition to a transcript, teacher's, administrator's and staff files must include a School Employee Evaluation for Tuberculosis, an I-9 Form for all employees hired after November 6, 1986, an E-Verify, and verification of Blood-borne Pathogens Training, and EAP training is required for ALL school employees. (Employee is defined as anyone in direct contact with your students.)

ACCEPTABLE _____ UNACCEPTABLE _____

Comments:

3. The school employs a sufficient number of teachers to sustain a general or college preparatory curriculum or both.

ACCEPTABLE _____ UNACCEPTABLE _____

Comments:

4. The school follows the recommendations of SCISA that a maximum class size should be 25 students but increases may be up to 28. Any increase above 28 has been approved by the school's Board of Directors and is documented and available to SCISA.

ACCEPTABLE _____ UNACCEPTABLE _____

Comments:

5. The school has a site-specific Emergency Action Plan (EAP)

ACCEPTABLE _____ UNACCEPTABLE _____

Comments:

6. The school maintains a course of study appropriate to its pupils adhering to either general diploma or college preparatory requirements.

ACCEPTABLE _____ UNACCEPTABLE _____

Comments:

7. The school has curriculum guides which provide a detailed description of the curriculum of the school and proof that it is being managed.

ACCEPTABLE _____ UNACCEPTABLE _____

Comments:

8. The school provides a library science / media arts program with either a centralized (inventoried & controlled) access to sufficient library books, technological and other resources, to supplement and enrich the total school program emphasizing instruction in research skills.

ACCEPTABLE _____ UNACCEPTABLE _____

Comments:

9. The school keeps adequate permanent records on students stored electronically and housed off site, or in a fire-proof cabinet. Student records must include a SC Certificate of Immunization, a current valid transcript, and a SCISAA Parent's Permission form, a SCISAA Medical Form (doctor's certificate), and a signed Warning of Inherent Risk form for athletic members.

ACCEPTABLE _____ UNACCEPTABLE _____

Comments:

10. The school provides adequate guidance service including annual use of nationally recognized achievement tests to validate local evaluation and to determine proper placement. The school administers achievement tests to four grades each year and I.Q. tests to three grades each year through a nationally recognized testing service. In addition, PSATs must be given in the 10th or 11th grade.

ACCEPTABLE _____ UNACCEPTABLE _____

Comments:

11. The school operates no less than five and one-half hours a day for 180 days (gross) per year. This is defined as no less than 175 student school days per session with only three half-day exam days each semester being allowed to count toward the total number of days as a full day. Gross days are defined as student days plus faculty in-service days. One unit courses meet five days per week for a minimum of 45 minutes each period or the equivalent.

ACCEPTABLE _____ UNACCEPTABLE _____

Comments:

12. The school has adequate laboratory facilities to support the curriculum of the school. These regulations require that the lab include eye wash, safety shower, ventilation, gas and water cut-offs located inside the lab, two fire extinguishers, and safe storage for flammable substances. Physical facilities meet the applicable federal, state, and local safety, fire, and health regulations. The grounds provide areas for physical education and recreation and the building is maintained to provide a safe, sanitary, and attractive environment for learning.

ACCEPTABLE _____ UNACCEPTABLE _____

Comments:

13. Administrators and/or school representatives must attend at least one headmasters' meeting (November or March) each year and are encouraged to attend workshops and take graduate courses.

ACCEPTABLE _____ UNACCEPTABLE _____

Comments:

14. Schools make provisions for faculty development either formally or informally.

ACCEPTABLE _____ UNACCEPTABLE _____

Comments:

15. The school has LONG-RANGE PLAN which includes each of the following:

- A three- to five-year outlook for the school.
- A statement of the enrollment goals of the school.
- A statement of the budget and salary goals of the school.
- A plan and demonstration of consistency between the school's Mission Statement and the Long-Range Plan.
- A plan and demonstration of consistency between the school's Curriculum and Long-Range Plan.
- Input from the broad school constituency concerning these listed items.

ACCEPTABLE _____ UNACCEPTABLE _____

Comments:

16. There is a clear-cut separation of authority between the Board and the Headmaster. A good working relationship exists between the Board, Headmaster, Faculty, and parents.

ACCEPTABLE _____ UNACCEPTABLE _____

Comments:

17. The school utilizes proper publications to communicate with students, faculty, and parents. (Faculty and Student handbooks)

ACCEPTABLE _____ UNACCEPTABLE _____

Comments:

18. The school has an Athletic Philosophy Statement. (only required for Athletic Members)

ACCEPTABLE _____ UNACCEPTABLE _____

Comments:

19. The school performs an annual Safety Audit. A copy must be made available to the visiting team on the day of the visit.

ACCEPTABLE _____ UNACCEPTABLE _____

Comments:

20. All teaching faculty has attended the SCISA Annual Teachers' Conference within the schools respective 3-5 year accreditation cycle.

ACCEPTABLE _____ UNACCEPTABLE _____

Comments:

21. A school representative has attended the mandatory accreditation training within 18 months of the scheduled SCISA visit.

ACCEPTABLE _____ UNACCEPTABLE _____

Comments:

22. Completed Internal Review Diagnostic

ACCEPTABLE _____ UNACCEPTABLE _____

Comments:

ACCREDITATION MATERIALS

Available for visitors on the day of your visit:

1. Blank application forms and contracts, blank testing applications or preliminary application.
2. School brochure or catalog; student handbook, faculty handbook, and the school or Board policy handbook
3. Copy of the current SCISA Accreditation Standards for an Accredited School.
4. Copy of the school's curriculum guides and be able to demonstrate how your school is managing the curriculum.
5. Copy of the school's current testing results.
6. A diagram indicating classroom locations with room numbers and the teacher assigned to that room.
7. A copy of your Internal Review Diagnostic, Long-Range Plan, and Self-Study.
8. A copy of your EAP (Emergency Action Plan).
9. A copy of your current Safety Audit.
10. A copy of your report and checklist from your previous visit (Does not apply to your Initial Accreditation). Proof that deficiencies from previous reports have been rectified. Provide actions taken on recommendations that were made by the previous ERT.

These materials must be readily available to the ERT members in the workroom designated.

Prepare a comfortable meeting room for the ERT. Plan to provide snacks, drinks, and lunch. Have your Board President, Chairman, and/or some other member of your Board to be available during lunch to meet with the team for approximately thirty (30) minutes.

STUDENT FILE:

SC Certificate of Immunization
Valid Transcript

STUDENT ATHLETE FILE:

- SC Certificate of Immunization
- Valid Transcript
- Parental Permission Form
- SCISA Athletic Medical Form
- Warning of Inherent Risk Form

FACULTY FILE:

- Bachelor's Degree Transcript and/or
- State Certificate
- TB Test
- I-9 Form and E-Verify
- Annual Training: Blood-borne Pathogen & EAP

STAFF FILE:

- TB Test
- I-9 Form and E-Verify
- Annual Training: Blood-borne Pathogen & EAP

STUDENT FILE

Name _____

Form	In File	Verified by	Date
SC Certificate of Immunization			
Valid Transcript			

Comments: _____

STAFF FORM

Name _____

Form	In File	Verified by	Date
TB Test			
I-9			
Blood-borne Pathogen Training			
EAP Training			
E-Verify			

Comments: _____

FACULTY FORM

Name

Form	In File	Verified by	Date
Transcript and/or State Certificate			
TB Test			
I-9			
Blood-borne Pathogen Training			
EAP Training			
E-Verify			

Comments: _____

STUDENT ATHLETE FILE

Name

Form	In File	Verified by	Date
SC Certificate of Immunization			
Valid Transcript			
Parental Permission			
SCISAA Medical Form			
Warning of Inherent Risk Form			

Comments: _____

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CHECKLIST

Teacher	Position	Professional Development <small>(Show three years)</small>	Attendance at SCISA Teachers' Conference

ACCREDITATION DAY CHECKLIST

- _____ Work room arranged for your visitors with tables, chairs, drinks, and snacks. The ERT will begin at 8:00.
- _____ Select a cross section of both students and parents to be interviewed by the team. Informal teacher interviews can take place during classroom visits.
- _____ The required materials are also located in the work room:
- Blank formal applications and contracts, blank testing applications or preliminary applications
 - School brochure or catalog, student and faculty handbooks and the school or board policy handbook
 - Complete current testing results
 - One copy of the school's curriculum guides and proof that the curriculum is being implemented
 - An annotated map of classroom locations, subjects and teachers
 - A copy of your Emergency Action Plan (EAP) and Safety Audit
 - A copy of the SCISA Accreditation Standards for an Accredited School
 - A copy of the Long-Range Plan, Self-Study, and Internal Review Diagnostic
 - A copy of the school's previous Accreditation Report
- _____ Prepare lunch for the visitors including the board members present (at least the Board Chair). This will be a "working lunch"
- _____ Team members are at your school to observe teaching and learning. No testing on accreditation days. No out of school or in-school activities besides teaching. No videos, field trips, guest speakers, etc. Provide an annotated schedule for the day.
- _____ Provide proof of virtual resources relating to book accessibility.

For visits other than initial accreditation:

- _____ Proof that all deficiencies from your previous visit have been rectified.
- _____ Cite actions taken on recommendations/suggestions made by the last visitation team.

SCISA ACCREDITATION PREFERENCE DATES

SCISA ACCREDITATION requires a one-day visit by two (enrollment under 400) SCISA representatives, or three (enrollment over 400) SCISA representatives. To assist us in preparing for your visit, please list, in order **of preference**, three (3) dates that would be suitable for your school. We will try as much as possible to schedule the visit for one of your choice dates. Before any plans are finalized, we will confirm everything with you.

The dates of your visit should be normal school days. Check the SCISA Activities' and the SCISA Athletic calendars to avoid conflicts. Also, do not select dates that could have groups of students or faculty members off campus for field trips, extracurricular activities, etc. The External Review Team (ERT) must see teachers actively teaching during the visit.

After the dates are determined, we will contact a SCISA Representative to be an evaluator on your visit. If there is someone you would prefer that we do NOT ask, please let us know in the space provided below.

School _____ Headmaster _____

Address _____ City _____ Zip code _____

Email address of School's Accreditation Chairperson _____

Your school serves grades _____ through _____

Total enrollment K-5 through last grade served _____

Number of full-time teachers _____ Number of part-time teachers _____

CHOICE OF DATES IN ORDER OF PREFERENCE

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

Is there a headmaster or SCISA Representative you prefer we NOT ask to be on your visit?

Name: _____