

The South Carolina Independent School Association



Cognia Accreditation Packet

5-Year Cycle
Revised June 2023

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INTRODUCTION TO SCISA COGNIA ACCREDITATION

The SCISA Cognia 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 Cognia 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 Cognia Accreditation is a powerful approach to improving learning, growth, and development of students as well as organizational effectiveness. SCISA Cognia 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 Cognia 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 Cognia Accreditation requires a two-day visit by five (enrollment under 400 students) SCISA representatives, or six (enrollment over 400 students) SCISA representatives. The school will be asked to choose three 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 two (2) weeks prior to the visit. The uploaded documentation consists of the following items:

1. A completed SELF STUDY REPORT
2. Completed COGNIA NARRATIVES
3. SCISA ASSURANCES DOCUMENTATION

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

South Carolina Independent School Association

Accreditation Cost Checklist



SCISA/COGNIA Accreditation

- Visited by an External Review Team (ERT) every five (5) years.
- Two (2) day visit
- The External Review Team (ERT) will consist of five (5) or six (6) members.
- Cost to School: \$2000 accreditation fee plus mileage of the ERT members and lodging.
- The visited school will receive an invoice from SCISA for the accreditation fee and the ERT members' mileage.
- The school is also responsible for lodging (when necessary), breakfast, 2 lunches, dinner, snacks, and drinks for the ERT members.

Required Documentation for SCISA/Cognia Accreditation

I. SELF-STUDY

The Self- Study is a narrative document that outlines the following information related to the school:

1. Organizational Overview
 - A. School Mission
 - B. School Vision
 - C. School History
 - D. Physical Plant
 - E. School Administration Summary
2. Educational Program Summary
3. Community Interaction
4. Current Enrollment Data
5. Five-Year Enrollment Trends
6. Standardized Test Scores
7. Long-Range Plan (See Page 8)

II. COGNIA NARRATIVES

1. Cognia Standards Narratives – The Cognia Standards Narratives are individual narratives for each of the 30 Cognia Standards. These narratives explain the school’s perspectives related to each standard. Each document should be labeled individually and include a minimum of 5 documents of evidence that demonstrate the school’s longitudinal efforts to comply with each standard. The Performance Standards are found on the Cognia website or in the SCISA Community.
2. Cognia School Survey Review – The Cognia School Survey Review is a narrative listing all the surveys that the school had administered during the past accreditation cycle. This would include all surveys over a minimum 2-year period as well as a comprehensive review of all areas designated as powerful practices or opportunities for improvement by the school’s administration.
3. Cognia Internal Review Diagnostic – The Internal Review Diagnostic is a self-ranking document the school administration completes that demonstrates and reflects the institution’s mission, beliefs, and expectations regarding the standard being examined. The Cognia Internal Review Diagnostic can be found in the SCISA Community.
4. Cognia Progress Report (if Applicable) – The Cognia Progress Report is a formal report completed by the school’s administration within 2 years of an institution’s formal Cognia Accreditation Evaluation. This report outlines the institution’s progress regarding “Improvement Priorities” as designated by the External Review Team from the previous evaluation.

5. Cognia Evidence Gathering – The Cognia accreditation process requires that all schools gather and archive evidence for each of the 30 Cognia Standards. SCISA recommends 3 to 7 documents of evidence per standard. These pieces of evidence should be relevant to the norms presented in each Standard and reflect a longitudinal reference since the school’s last accreditation review.

III. **SCISA ASSURANCES DOCUMENTATION**

1. By-Laws
2. Annual Report
3. School Budget
4. School Calendar
5. School Map
6. Curriculum Guides
7. Faculty Policy Manual
8. Student Policy Manual
9. Professional Development Offerings
10. Emergency Action Plan
11. Annual Safety Audit
12. Previous Accreditation Report

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, each file of an employee 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 Bloodborne Pathogens Training, and Emergency Action Plan (EAP) training. Bloodborne 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 for each high school student, a current report card for each elementary and middle school student, and for SCISA athletic members, each athlete should have - a SCISAA Parent's Permission/Agreement for Participation form, a current physical and

SCISAA Medical Form (doctor's certificate), Student-Parent Concussion Awareness Form, and a signed Warning of Inherent Risk form.

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 5-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 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 five years. However, the ERT members may recommend either of the following types 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.

- 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.

-- 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 five-year term.

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

C. Each time a school is visited, a \$2000 accreditation fee will be required in advance. A fee of \$175 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.

D. 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.

E. Accreditation becomes effective at the Board meeting at which it is approved and becomes effective July 1 and expires on June 30 of the designated year.

Last revised and adopted June 2020

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 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 the 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 always available in the school's virtual library.
- A multitude of charging ports must be 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.

LIBRARY 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 (See Page 5 or Page 20; Items 1-7)

2. COGNIA NARRATIVES (See Page 5 & 6 or Page 21; Items 1-5)
Cognia Performance Standards are found on the Cognia website or in the SCISA Community.

3. SCISA ASSURANCES DOCUMENTATION (See Page 6)

4. COGNIA PROGRESS REPORT (if applicable)

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

DOCUMENTATION OF SELF STUDY

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

1. To promote the Board, the Head of School, and Faculty to enter a Self-study for improvement.
2. To acquaint the External Review Team (ERT) with the operations of the school in advance of their visit.

It is the function of the Accreditation Committee to ensure the Standards of the South Carolina Independent School Association have been met. To ensure that the Association's Standards will be applied in an equitable manner to all schools, each school is asked to provide the information below. This is to be considered privileged information.

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

- A. Make a cover page. Include the school's name and address, headmaster's name, assistant headmaster's and any other administrator's name(s), and date of the report.
- B. The body of the report should contain the following information:
 1. Organizational Overview
 - A. School Mission
 - B. School Vision
 - C. School History
 - D. Physical Plant - Provide a narrative account of the school plant, paying particular attention to the best and worst features.
 - E. School Administration Summary - Describe the school's administrative organization.
 2. Educational Program Summary - Provide a detailed description of the curriculum of the school. Describe the rationale that leads to the development and adoption of the curriculum in each discipline. (Have Curriculum Guide available for inspection by the ERT.)
 3. Community Interaction
 4. Current Enrollment Data
 5. Five-Year Enrollment Trends
 6. Standardized Test Scores
 7. Long-Range Plan - The Long-Range Plan must include the following elements:
 - A three-to-five-year outlook for the school.
 - A statement of the enrollment goals for 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 the Long-Range Plan.
 - Input from the broad school constituency concerning these listed items.

Documentation of Cognia Narratives

1. Cognia Standards Narratives – The Cognia Performance Standards Narratives are individual narratives for each of the 30 Cognia Standards. These narratives explain the school’s perspectives related to each standard. Each document should be labeled individually and include a minimum of 5 documents of evidence that demonstrate the school’s longitudinal efforts to comply with each standard. (See Cognia Performance Standards and Rubrics Document – found on Cognia website or in the SCISA Community)
2. Cognia School Survey Review – The Cognia School Survey Review is a narrative listing all the surveys that the school had administered during the past accreditation cycle. This would include all surveys over a minimum 2-year period as well as a comprehensive review of all areas designated as a powerful practice or an opportunity for improvement by the school’s administration.
3. Cognia Internal Review Diagnostic – The Internal Review Diagnostic is a self-ranking document the school administration completes that demonstrates and reflects the institution’s mission, beliefs, and expectations regarding the standard being examined. There are 4 Key Characteristics with a total of 30 Standards. This document can be found and downloaded from the SCISA Community. The school will complete using these directions.
 - a) Assign a rank for each standard based upon the school’s evidence.
 - b) The rank should be based on compliance of those evidence.
 - 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
4. Cognia Progress Report (if Applicable) – The Cognia Progress Report is a formal report completed by the school’s administration within 2 years of an institution’s formal Cognia Accreditation Evaluation. This report outlines the institution’s progress regarding “Improvement Priorities” as designated by the External Review Team from the previous evaluation.
5. Cognia Evidence Gathering – The Cognia accreditation process requires that all schools gather and archive evidence for each of the 30 Cognia Standards. SCISA recommends 3 to 7 documents of evidence per standard. These pieces of evidence should be relevant to the norms presented in each Standard and reflect a longitudinal reference since the school’s last accreditation review.

SCISA Assurances Documentation

1. By-Laws
2. Annual Report
3. School Budget
4. School Calendar
5. School Map
6. Curriculum Guides
7. Faculty Policy Manual
8. Student Policy Manual
9. Professional Development Offerings
10. Emergency Action Plan
11. Annual Safety Audit
12. Previous Accreditation Report - Provide a list of progress made on recommendations and/or deficiencies written by the visitation committee on your last visit.

NOTE:

RESOURCES (can be found on the Community Page)

- Cogna Performance Standards and Rubrics (also found on the Cogna website)
- Performance Standards Resource Cards (also found on the Cogna website)
- Cogna Performance Standards (also found on the Cogna website)
- Cogna System Standards Diagnostic “Evidences Rosetta Stone” (also found on the Cogna website)
- SCISA can email these documents upon request

The Accreditation Committee may, in its review of a specific school, request additional information which is not asked for in this document.



SCISA/Cognia Accreditation Internal Review Diagnostic

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 commit 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/Cognia Standards for Quality Schools

The SCISA/Cognia Standards for Quality Schools provide the foundation for the SCISA/Cognia 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/Cognia Standards for Quality Schools are comprised of Key Characteristics, Performance 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 are learning. 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.

SCISA/Cognia Internal Review Diagnostic

The Internal Review Diagnostic can be downloaded from the SCISA Community.

HOW TO SCORE THE INTERNAL REVIEW DIAGNOSTIC

- a) Assign a rank for each standard based upon the school's evidence.
- b) The rank should be based on compliance of those evidence.
- 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

SCISA Index of Educational Quality

Understanding the SCISA Index:

SCISA and Cognia will review the results of the Accreditation Engagement Review to make a final determination concerning accreditation status, including the appropriate next steps for your institution in response to these findings. SCISA provides a quantitative assessment index known as the SCISA Index of Education Quality (SCISA Index or SI). This index is a holistic measure of overall performance based on a comprehensive set of standards and review criteria. A formative tool for improvement, it identifies areas of success as well as areas in need of focus. The SCISA Index (SI) is comprised of the Standards Diagnostic ratings from the four Key Characteristics (1. Culture of Learning; 2. Leadership for Learning; 3. Engagement of Learning; and 4. Growth in Learning) and all SETI observations rankings by the External Review Team (ERT). The SI results are reported on a scale of 100 to 400 and provides information about how the institution is performing compared to expected criteria.

Institutions should review the SI in relation to the Findings from the review in the areas of Initiate, Improve and Impact. An SI score below 250 indicates that the institution has several areas within the Initiate level and should focus their improvement efforts on those Standards within the Initiate level. An SI in the range of 250- 300 indicates that the institution has several Standards within the Improve level and is using results to inform continuous improvement and demonstrate sustainability. An SI of 300 and above indicates the institution is beginning to reach the Impact level and is engaged in practices that are sustained over time and are becoming ingrained in the culture of the institution. Additionally, SCISA will provide an average (range) of all AIN (All Cognia In-Network Institutions) institutions evaluated for accreditation in the last five years. The range of the annual AIN IEQ average is presented to enable each school to benchmark their results with other institutions in the network.

Calculating the SCISA Index:

School leaders and Lead Evaluators must have a firm understanding of both the meaning of the SI and how this number is calculated. Listed below are the steps for calculating the SI score for member accrediting schools:

1. The Lead Evaluator of the External Review will calculate an average score for each of the 4 Key Characteristics (1. Culture of Learning; 2. Leadership for Learning; 3. Engagement of Learning, and 4. Growth in Learning) and the SETI evaluations. These averages are calculated by the Lead Evaluator after having discussions with the ERT to rank each category.

2. The Standard Diagnostic Rankings comes from the Standard Diagnostic Results that are determined by ranking the 4 Characteristics (1. Culture of Learning; 2. Leadership for Learning; 3. Engagement of Learning, and 4. Growth in Learning). These rankings are determined by the following procedures:

- A. Rankings (1 to 4 Likert Scale) are recorded by the Lead Evaluator after thorough discussions about each Standard has taken place with each ERT member.
- B. An average Key Characteristics score will be assigned to each of the four (4) Characteristics.
- C. Each of these four (4) rankings will be compiled by the Lead Evaluator to provide an average score for each Key Characteristic.
- D. The number for each of the four (4) Key Characteristics will be multiplied by twenty (20), which reflects the 20% value assigned to this diagnostic, to arrive at the Characteristic Average. These numbers are **NOT** to be recorded in the Cognia External Review Final Report. Instead, these numbers are added together with the SETI rankings to determine the Institutional SCISA Index (SI). See item 4 for details.

Example:

Culture of Learning Average:	3.25 X 20 = 70.00
Leadership for Learning Average:	3.00 X 20 = 60.00
Engagement of Learning Average:	3.25 X 20 = 70.00
Growth in Learning Average:	3.00 X 20 = 60.00

(Round this number to the **second** number to the right of the decimal)

3. The SETI rankings are determined by the following procedures:

- A. Rankings (1 to 4 Likert Scale) are recorded by each ERT member for the classroom / instructor that they are evaluating. This is done by using the SETI's 28 evaluation items organized into seven (7) environments aligned with the Cognia Standards.
- B. An average environment score will be assigned to each of the seven (7) environments. These Environments are as follows:
 - 1. Equitable Learning Environment
 - 2. High Expectations Environment
 - 3. Supportive Learning Environment
 - 4. Active Learning Environment
 - 5. Progress Monitoring and Feedback Environment
 - 6. Well-Managed Learning Environment
 - 7. Digital Learning Environment.
- C. Each of these seven (7) rankings will be compiled to give an Overall SETI Average for the school.

D. This number will be multiplied by twenty (20), which reflects the 20% value assigned to this diagnostic, to arrive at the Overall SETI Average. This number is to be recorded in the Cognia External Review Final Report.

Example:	Equitable Learning Environment Average:	3.25
	High Expectations Environment Average:	3.00
	Supportive Learning Environment Average:	3.25
	Active Learning Environment Average:	3.00
	Progress Monitoring and Feedback Environment Average:	3.00
	Well-Managed Learning Environment Average:	3.50
	Digital Learning Environment Average:	<u>2.75</u>
	(Add all 7 Environments together)	21.75
	(Then divide that number (21.75) by 7 to calculate the Overall SETI Average)	3.107
	(Round this number to the second number to the right of the decimal)	3.11
	Then multiply the Overall SETI Average (3.11) by 20	62.20

4. The Institutional SCISA Index score is determined by adding all four (4) Characteristics scores with the SETI rankings. This number is recorded in the External Review Final Report.

Example:	Culture of Learning Average:	70.00
	Leadership for Learning Average:	60.00
	Engagement of Learning Average:	70.00
	Growth in Learning Average:	60.00
	Overall SETI Ranking Average:	<u>62.20</u>
	Institutional SCISA Index (SI) Score	322.22

*Please note that these instructions are for manual calculations of the before mentioned scores. The SCISA Accreditation Office is planning on providing a built-in algorithm to calculate these scores electronically.

SCISA/Cognia Accreditation Timeline & Visit Checklist

- _____ The school will conduct a minimum of three comprehensive surveys from the Cognia Survey Platform. These comprehensive surveys should include three separate surveys related to Student, parent, and faculty/staff perceptions.
- _____ 24 months prior to the External Review, have all teachers sign-up for “Characteristics/Standards Teams.” Assign administrative personnel as leads for the Cognia 4 Key Characteristics.
- _____ 18 to 20 months ahead of the External Review, set up “Characteristic/Standards Teams” for each of the 4 Characteristics and 30 standards to evaluate and rank the school regarding compliance within each characteristic and standard. Teams should meet separately. Have open dialog about each of these issues. Rank each standard at a lower ranking rather than a higher rank. Conduct multiple meetings throughout the year to discuss and modify your findings.
- _____ 6 to 9 months prior to the External Review, re-evaluate the “Characteristics/Standard Teams’ rankings. Adjust the rankings if areas of deficiency have been corrected. Keep these rankings lower rather than higher.
- _____ Email or mail a student-written “Welcome Letter” to ERT team members 45 days ahead of visit.
- _____ Submit and upload all narratives, diagnostics, documentation, and evidence as specified in the SCISA/Cognia Accreditation Packet to the SCISA Platform 30 days prior to the ERT onsite visit.
- _____ Email the menus for breakfast, lunch, and dinner 21 days before the onsite visit.
- _____ Email a welcome letter, directions, sleep accommodations 21 days before the onsite visit. Use the Sample Cognia Accreditation Welcome Letter format.
- _____ Reserve hotel for the 5 ERT members at least 21 days prior to the visit.
- _____ Develop a schedule for the ERT members to visit every teacher on your campus for 20 minutes per teacher using the SETI observation. All SETI Observations should be completed on Day One of the visit. Email this schedule to the ERT 21 days prior to the team’s visit. Have a hard copy on hand as well.
- _____ Assemble the school’s Student Ambassador’s and assign each ERT team member an ambassador. The Student Ambassador will email the ERT team member to introduce themselves before the ERT member arrives on campus. The ambassadors will also be in the parking lot to greet each member as they come on campus. During the visit, the SA will escort the team member from building to building and classroom to classroom.

Sample Daily Schedule for ERT

Day One

- 7:15 Have conference room set up for ERT
- 7:30 Head of School welcome and breakfast
- 8:15 Campus tour by school Administrator
- 8:45 Head of School Overview via PowerPoint Presentation
 - A. Introduce Administration Team
 - B. Each Characteristics/Standard Team Leader gives an overview of their Characteristic/Standard and preparation.
- 9:10 ERT SETI Observations
- 12:00 Lunch
- 1:00 ERT SETI Observations
- 2:30 ERT meets with Parents and Patrons
- 3:15 ERT meets with Teachers
- 4:00 ERT meets with Board Members
- 5:00 ERT Group Work
- 6:00 ERT dinner at hotel.

Day Two

- 7:45 ERT breakfast and meeting
- 8:15 ERT Group Work
- 11:30 ERT Dinner
- 12:30 ERT Group Work
- 3:00 ERT meeting with the Headmaster for overview of the accreditation findings.
- 3:30 ERT meeting with the faculty to review the accreditation findings.
- 4:00 ERT Leader meeting with the Board Chairperson.
- 4:30 ERT dismissal

SAMPLE Letter to ERT Members

March 3, 2022

Dear **Dr. John Doe**,

On behalf of Conway Christian School, I would like to thank you for volunteering to serve on the Cognia Accreditation Team that will be examining our school on March 28th and 29th, 2022.

In order to help make your stay with us as productive as possible, I am enclosing an itinerary of events for both of the days of the Accreditation Team's visit, parking instructions while at Conway Christian School, and instructions for accessing the school's SCISA Community account to review Cognia evidences. Hotel and lodging accommodations are available upon request at the **Hampton Inn in XXXXXXXX**. Please let me know how many nights, if any, you may need me to book for your stay in **XXXXXX**.

Breakfast will be provided at the **Hampton Inn** and lunch will be served at the school on both March 28th and 29th. Enclosed you will find the menu for each of these meals. If there are any special dietary needs that you may have, please contact me as soon as possible.

On the night of **Sunday, March 27th, at 6:30 p.m.**, each of the Accreditation Team members are invited to a **dinner at XXXXX's Restaurant in downtown XXXX**. This informal meeting will give each of the ERT members an opportunity to discuss issues related to the Cognia process prior to your formal on-campus visit. The dress for this dinner is casual. If you cannot attend this function, please let me know.

Please review all information and contact me if you have any specific needs or accommodations that I can help you with. Once again, thank you for your assistance in helping Conway Christian School strive to achieve Cognia Accreditation status.

With regards, I am sincerely yours,

Spencer A. Jordan, Ed. D.

Executive Director

Office Phone: 803-535-4820

Home Phone: 803-473-0100

Cell Phone: 803-460-9029

Email: SJORDAN@SCISA.COM

Cognia Accreditation Team Visit Itinerary

SUNDAY – MARCH 27, 2022

6:30PM Dinner at "XXXXXX" Restaurant

MONDAY – MARCH, 2022

7:00AM Breakfast at Hampton Inn

7:45AM Team arrives at Conway Christian School

8:00AM - 8:30AM Overview Presentation

8:30AM – 9:00AM Standards Review Presentation in the XXXXX Center

9:00AM - 9:30AM School Tour

10:00AM – 12:00PM ELEOT Observations

12:00PM – 1:00PM Working Lunch in Lower School Conference Room

1:00PM – 2:30PM ELEOT Observations

2:30PM – 3:00PM ERT Meeting in Lower School Conference Room

3:00PM – 3:45PM Teacher Interviews in the XXXXXX Center

4:00PM – 4:45PM Parent and Community Interviews in the XXXXXX Center

5:00PM – 5:45PM Board Member Interviews in the XXXXXX Center

6:00PM – 6:30PM ERT Meeting in the Lower School Conference Room

6:30PM – 8:00PM Working Dinner in the Lower School Conference Room

TUESDAY – MARCH 29, 2022

7:00AM Breakfast at Hampton Inn

8:00AM Team arrives at

8:00AM - 8:30AM ERT Work Session

8:30AM – 8:50AM ELEOT Observation

9:00AM – 10:10AM	Student Interviews in the XXXXXX Center Elementary Student Interviews: 9:00AM – 9:20AM Middle School Student Interviews: 9:25AM – 9:45AM High School Student Interviews: 9:50AM – 10:10AM
10:10AM – 12:00PM	ERT Work Session
12:00PM – 1:00PM	Working Lunch in Room
1:00PM – 2:00PM	ERT Work Session
2:00PM – 3:00PM	ERT Meeting with Headmaster
3:00PM – 3:30PM	ERT Presentation with Faculty, Staff, Board Members, Parents and Community Members

Driving and Parking Directions

Parking Instructions and Main Office Directions:

When you turn on to the school driveway off of XXXXXX Road, parking will be available in the front of the XXXXX Building, which is located on the left as you enter the campus. The Main Office is located through the double glass doors under the porch at the intersection in the hallway in the XXXXXX Building. There you will find another set of double glass doors. Please proceed through these doors, which is the entrance to the Main Office suite. A Student Ambassador will greet you upon arrival.

Directions to the Hampton Inn:

Take Interstate XX to Exit 1000 (Highway XXX). Go towards XXXXXX on Highway XXX. The Hampton Inn will be on your left about ¼ of a mile off of Interstate XX towards XXXXXXX.

Directions to XXXXXXXXXX Restaurant:

Take Interstate XX to Exit 1000 (Highway XXX). Go towards XXXXXX on Highway XXX. Go into XXXXXXXXXX to Mills Street (Highway XXX). Turn right on Mills Street/Highway XXX (This will be on the court house square). XXXXXXX will be on the right approximately ½ of a mile on Mills Street/Highway XXX towards the lake. (Right in front of the entrance to XXXXX Health Center).

SCISA Community Instructions

1. Go to the SCISA Website at www.scisa.org
2. Login on the SCISA Community tab
3. Enter the password: TBA

ACCREDITATION MATERIALS

Available for visitors on the day of your visit:

1. Blank application forms and contracts, blank testing applications or preliminary applications.
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 visiting team members in the workroom designated.

Prepare a comfortable meeting room for the ERT. Plan to provide snacks, drinks, 2 lunches, breakfast, and dinner. Have your Board President, Chairman, and/or some other member of your Board be available to meet with the team for approximately thirty (30) minutes (may be during a meal/lunch/dinner).

COMPLETE FILES CHECKLIST

STUDENT FILE:

- SC Certificate of Immunization
- Academic Testing
- For HS -Valid Transcript
- For LS and MS – Current Academic Record

STUDENT ATHLETE FILE: (May be kept in a separate file)

- Parental Permission Form/Agreement for Participation
- Current Physical
- SCISA Athletic Medical Form
- Warning of Inherent Risk Form
- Student-Parent Concussion Awareness Form
- If applicable, Transfer Form

FACULTY FILE:

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

STAFF FILE:

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

STUDENT FILE

Name _____

Form	In File	Verified by	Date
SC Certificate of Immunization			
LS/MS -Current Academic Record			
HS - Valid Transcript			

Comments: _____

STAFF FORM

Name _____

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

Comments: _____

FACULTY FORM

Name

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

Comments: _____

STUDENT ATHLETE FILE

Name

Form	In File	Verified by	Date
Parental Permission			
Agreement for Participation			
Current Physical			
SCISAA Medical Form			
Warning of Inherent Risk Form			
If Applicable, Transfer 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 ready to begin work at 8:00 on the first day of the visit.

_____ 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, dinner for the first day, and breakfast, and lunch on the second day for the ERT members. Include the present board members (or at least the Board Chair) during one of the working meals.

_____ 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 two-day visit by three (enrollment under 400) SCISA representatives, or four (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: _____