



National Independent Private Schools Association

**The National Independent
Private Schools Association**

**ACCREDITATION
AND
THERAPEUTIC
CERTIFICATION
PROGRAM**

2016-17

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National Independent Private Schools Association
The NIPSA Evaluation and Accreditation Program

PART I
Directions for the School Administrator

Accreditation is an affirmation of the school's commitment to self-improvement and educational excellence, and the process of accreditation is one of self-evaluation and improvement of the school program. The essence of the process is the self-study, in which all the school community participate and a site visit at which time a committee of peers determines the accuracy of the self-study and its findings.

The following requirements and directions are intended to give the school administrator and those in charge of the self-study an accurate idea of the criteria for accreditation of the National Independent Private Schools Association and how to successfully conduct the self-study and site visit.

Purposes of Accreditation:

1. To encourage improvement through a program of on-going self-study and evaluation.
2. To validate that the school has sound education objectives and goals, and is substantially accomplishing them.

Definition of a School

A "school" for the purposes of membership and accreditation in the National Independent Private Schools Association shall be:

1. A traditional academic school of any grades Pre-Kindergarten through 12 consisting of classrooms and other appropriate facilities, and that has an educational program consistent with the criteria set forth for accreditation. Students attend classes regularly and receive instruction directly from professional teachers and advisors in face-to-face interaction.
2. A combination of a traditional academic school and an online school is defined as a school that delivers a portion of its academic program online and a portion in a traditional classroom setting. This type of school must meet the standards for accreditation for both brick and mortar and online schools.

Accreditation Process for Applying Schools:

1. For schools seeking accreditation or re-accreditation:
 - a. Schools must submit application for accreditation or re-accreditation approximately six (6) months prior to the anticipated time of the site visit. If a school needs a fall visit the application should be submitted by February 15th of the previous year. For a spring visit the application should be submitted by September 15th of the year in which the visit is required.
 - b. All annual membership and assessment fees must be current.
 - c. The vice- president for accreditation or the executive director appoints a site chair.
 - d. The site chair and school leadership decide on the time for the site visit and the composition of the visiting team.
 - e. The school conducts a self-study and hosts a site visit.
 - f. The chair submits a report with recommendations to the board at the next board meeting. The board votes to accredit or deny. The successful school may be recognized at the annual meeting of the general membership.
2. The following rules and regulations apply to those schools that are new to NIPSA:
 - a. Schools make application for candidacy and submit the application fee. An informal site visit by a member may be required.

- b. Upon acceptance into candidacy the school pays all annual membership and assessment fees. (Schools that are accepted for membership after March 31 of each year will pay 50% of the fees for that year. Fees for schools that apply after July 1st will apply to the subsequent school year.)
- c. A school must be in its third year of operation to seek accreditation, and a school must seek accreditation within three (3) years of becoming a candidate. Schools that do not seek accreditation within three years will be dropped from candidacy.
- d. Schools that are already in their third year of operation may apply for accreditation during their first full year of candidacy
- e. Procedures for accreditation are the same as for schools requiring re-accreditation. (See a through h. above.)

3. Additional sites, satellite schools and wholly owned subsidiaries:

- a. The parent organization must notify the NIPSA national office, in writing, of their desire to accredit an additional location.
- b. An application for the accreditation of an additional site must be prepared for EACH such location and must be accompanied by the appropriate fee. The parent organization must certify that the school is under the same corporate management, that it operates under the same direction, mission, philosophy, policies and that the school meets the essential requirements for student safety, etc.
- c. All annual membership and assessment fees must be current for each such location. (See fee schedule.)
- d. At the discretion of the board and executive director and after an informal visit by a member, each such school may be granted a one-year provisional accreditation.
- e. During the first year of membership, the school must undergo a self-study. The charge for the self-study and processing is the same as for an accreditation or re-accreditation. (See fee schedule.)
- f. A site chair is appointed, visiting committee chosen and visit is made for each location.
- g. The site committee for each location prepares and submits a report with recommendations to the board.
- h. The board votes to accredit or deny.
- i. Successful schools may be recognized at the summer general meeting.

4. POLICIES REGARDING CANDIDATE STATUS

A NIPSA Candidate School:

- Has completed the application for candidacy and has paid the application fee.
- Has provided information as to the school's structure, enrollment, viability, etc.
- Has confirmed that the school conforms to the NIPSA Code of Ethics
- May only verbally state that the school is a NIPSA Candidate for accreditation and is in the accreditation process.
- May not post any certificate, or publish, or represent that the school is a NIPSA Candidate for accreditation and is in the accreditation process.
- May NOT state, publish, or represent that the school is accredited by NIPSA, until the school has completed the accreditation process, has been accepted by the Board of NIPSA, and has received official notification from NIPSA that the school is accredited.

5. Policies Regarding Schools that Seek Both Accreditation and Therapeutic Certification:

- a. Schools that have a therapeutic component or who describe themselves as therapeutic must undergo therapeutic certification in order to be academically accredited.
- b. All of the rules and regulations described above apply to all schools, including therapeutic schools.
- c. Therapeutic schools must apply for both academic and therapeutic candidacy, must pay all fees (see Fee Schedule), must conduct a self-study that includes both the academic criteria described in Sections II and IV – Evaluative Criteria, and a School Improvement Plan (Section III), and must host a site visit of peer educators and therapists.
- d. Schools that have been accredited by the Joint Commission, the Council on Accreditation (COA) or the Commission for the Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) MAY be exempt from conducting the self-study and therapeutic site visit if their status is approved and verified by the Vice-President for Special Schools of NIPSA. However, they will still be required to pay all dues, fees and assessments required of therapeutic schools.

6. Policies regarding schools seeking joint accreditation with other accrediting organizations or associations.

a. A school may seek joint accreditation with another approved accrediting body. NIPSA has joint accrediting procedures with AdvancED, which includes the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement (SACS CASI), the North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement (NCA CASI) and the Northwest Accrediting Commission (NWAC); and the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC), the Middle States Association of Schools and Colleges (MSACS) and all members of the National Council for Private School Accreditation (NCPSA).

The school must choose to do their self study under either NIPSA protocols or the protocols of the other accrediting body. Policies for the self study, site visit and other policies will be dictated by the protocols chosen with the following caveat: the school must meet the criteria and standards of both agencies and must pay all dues and fees of both agencies.

b. The school must pay the appropriate fees as described in the Fee Schedule.

6. Early childhood education

Early childhood centers must meet all the requirements of regular PK – 12 schools and must meet or exceed the requirements in Section 2 (13) in this manual.

7. Recognition

Accreditation is granted for a period of seven (7) years for academic schools, five (5) years for therapeutic schools and, in the case of joint accreditation with other accrediting bodies when the school elects to use the protocols of the other accrediting body, NIPSA will accredit for the same period as the other accrediting body. During that time a school is obligated to report its status yearly. Schools that fail to keep their annual membership and assessment current, that fail to submit their annual report or that fail to submit their interim report may lose their membership and their accreditation. A certificate, recognizing accreditation, will be issued yearly upon receipt of the fall assessment fees. The official International NIPSA certificate and the National Certificate of NCPSA will be the only official recognition of accreditation.

SELF-STUDY – PROCEDURES

1. A Site Committee Chairperson is assigned to aid the candidate school. The Site Chairperson, together with the head of the school to be visited, selects the dates and times of the proposed site visit.

2. The Site chair, together with the Executive Director, selects the members of the visiting committee.

3. The self-study is conducted and should involve all segments of the school community. The self-study report should be a reflection of the observations of the administration, faculty, staff and parents.

4. When the self-study is completed, one copy is sent to the national office, one copy to the site chairperson, and one copy to each member of the visiting committee. These copies are to be sent at least four (4) weeks prior to the proposed visitation date. It is preferred that these copies be in digital form and that they be submitted by email.

5. After the visitation is completed the Report of the Visiting Committee is sent to the Executive Director by the site chair. Copies are sent to the Board of Directors, (who will become the Accrediting and Certification Commission when voting on all accreditations and/or certifications), and one copy is sent to the school, and one copy is sent to the school.

6. The Site Committee Report and recommendations are presented at the next regularly scheduled board meeting or may be distributed to the board members by electronic means, and the recommendations are voted upon. Successful schools may be recognized at the summer board meeting.

Evaluations:

Evaluations are ordinarily conducted in the final year of the accreditation term or interim evaluations may be conducted at the time of a change in ownership, change of program, change of location, special reasons, or for other reason that the board may specify.

1. The school conducts a self-study and evaluation of its total program, using as a guide the appropriate NIPSA evaluative criteria and appraisal instruments. All constituents of the school family, staff, students, and parents should participate.

2. **It is required that a school improvement plan or strategic plan be part of the self-study. The school improvement plan must focus on the school's process of improving student performance and outcomes. A strategic plan, while focusing on all planning for the school (site changes, plant improvements, etc.) must also include a section on plans for the improvement of student achievement in all areas.**

3. The school should allow six months to one year to conduct and evaluate the self-study.

4. A site committee chairperson is assigned to work with the school in its preparation of the self-study.
5. The site committee, made up of a minimum of two people visits the school to verify the school's findings and comments on the school's conclusion. The duration of the visit is one to two days or more depending on the student population. No more than two (2) persons shall be appointed to the Site Committee from one school.
6. An evaluative report, based on what the school is striving to accomplish and how well it is succeeding, is shared with the school by the site committee and is then forwarded to the Executive Director and to the Accrediting Committee. The report includes the Site Committee's recommendations and commendations for the school as well as the recommendation for provisional accreditation, accreditation, warning or probation. The final decision of the board is not bound by any recommendations.

Specific Directions for the Self Study

In order to guide the candidate school, the following directions and suggestions are made:

1. The administrator/owner has the right to refuse the person appointed as the site committee chairperson or the site committee members without any necessary explanation to the Vice President of Accreditation. If this occurs, a new chair or committee member will be appointed. However, once a site chair is agreed upon, he or she cannot be changed except for reasons of health or other unavoidable occurrence.
2. The administrator/owner should plan to attend any conferences held and any accreditation meeting scheduled during the candidacy period.
3. He/she should be familiar with the sixteen (16) criteria for accreditation and their respective performance indicators as expressed in this handbook.
4. He/she should have frequent contact with the Site Chairperson keeping him/her informed of the progress and an approximate finishing date.
5. He/she should feel free to contact the national office or the Vice-President for Accreditation for information and help at any time.
6. Should there be any controversy about the recommendations of the site committee, he/she should plan to attend the Board/Accreditation Meeting when the decision concerning the school's accreditation is given.
7. Should it be necessary to file an appeal of the board's decision, he/she should be familiar with the *Process for Appeal* and the necessary forms.

Criteria for Accreditation

A school shall be evaluated on the basis of the degree to which it is accomplishing its purposes and functions as outlined in its own statement of objectives and on the appropriateness of those purposes and functions for an institution of its type.

In addition, to qualify for accreditation, a school must give evidence of adequately meeting the following criteria that are established as general guidelines to determine the effectiveness of a school's educational program and services.

The school shall have:

1. General Data
Current statistical information is supplied.
2. Philosophy and Goals
There is a statement of philosophy approved by the governing body of the school. Goals and objectives, consistent with the philosophy, shall be systematically developed and reviewed by the administration and staff, and are to be shared often with the students and parent community. There shall be a continual evaluation of progress toward these goals and objectives. An annual report should be filed each year as well as an interim report during the fourth year of accreditation.
3. Organization
The school must have a clearly defined and demonstrable organizational structure for the effective implementation of the school's goals and objectives. This structure should specify: the functions of the administration, staff and students; the administrative relationship among these groups; and the limits of authority and responsibility.
4. Curriculum
The school must have a curricular program with a written curriculum guide consisting of course descriptions and objectives, instructional strategies, materials, and methods of assessment to provide all students with courses of

instruction that are consistent with the school's philosophy and objectives and with the students' needs, abilities, and interests. There must be adequate instructional resources to implement the curricular program. The curriculum must be the object of continual evaluation and development by faculty, students and administration. This evaluation should be part of each annual and interim report.

5. Instruction and Learning

An instructional program that addresses the needs of all students, emphasizes active learning, and provides teachers and students with ample materials. The instructional program must meet state requirements for days and hours of instruction. Schools must utilize norm-referenced testing and assessments for identification of student needs and for curricular decisions. Testing data is interpreted to staff, parents and students. Samples and schedules are included in the accreditation self-study.

6. Technology

Technology is employed in a variety of ways in different schools, from offering online courses to students of this school or other schools, enhancing instruction by using a variety of technological strategies, employing online instruction provided by other sources, and providing direct instruction in the use of technology. Not all of the items in this section will be appropriate for every school.

7. Pupil Services and Activities

- Services: Pupil services that identify the need, interests, aptitude and goals of all its students and provide these students with adequate educational, personal, social and career guidance.
- Activities: Appropriate student activity offerings that supplement the formal and informal instruction of the school. These should be responsive to the students' needs and shall draw upon special skills and enthusiasm among students and faculty alike.

Schools adhere to the health and safety inspections related to their programs and local requirements. Proof of inspections are filed and included in the accreditation self-study. Suitability of the facilities for program implementation and safety features are also included in the accreditation self-study. NIPSA schools must meet all federal, state and local laws and regulations that may apply to their particular circumstances.

8. School Staff

A well qualified staff of sufficient number to effectively fulfill its responsibilities. A degreed faculty member should directly supervise non-degreed personnel. Background screening is required and reviewed for all personnel. Requirements may vary from state to state.

9. Parent Community

A supportive parent community is encouraged to share its ideas and recommendations and, when invited, actively participate in prescribed areas of the school.

10. School Plant

The school plant and physical facilities enable the staff to effectively implement the school program.. All school facilities must be in compliance with all state and federal laws, and must adhere to all fire and safety codes and regulations of the community in which they are located.

11. Finance

The school must have continuing financial support which is adequate to provide staff, physical facilities, instructional resources, and other support services necessary to operate an effective educational program. Budgetary planning involves those who are responsible for implementing the school program and services. All personnel should be covered by liability insurance.

12. Dormitories and Dormitory Life (When applicable)

As life in a boarding school is integral to the overall development of the student, the aspects of that life must be evaluated as part of the entire student experience. The school must exhibit that care has been taken to plan for and implement policies that provide for the affective development of the child in his or her relationships with adults and other students.

13. School Improvement

As part of the self-study the school will prepare a school improvement plan (SIP). The school improvement committee shall represent the school community and may employ a model that is appropriate for the school and its mission. The plan should analyze data from the self-study and other sources to determine the present state of the school and to develop objectives and action plans to improve student learning. (See the Appendix III for a School Improvement Rubric.)

14. Early Childhood Programs (When applicable)

In addition to the criteria described in Sections 1-12 above, the following criteria, particular to early childhood programs, will be observed. Schools should keep in mind that in many communities law often dictates the requirements for early childhood education. In addition to the requirements below, schools must meet all local, state and national requirements that may apply to their individual circumstances. Schools must also meet any state requirements for early childhood programs if the school is participating in a state-supported program. (See the Appendix for Standards of the

National Council for Private School Accreditation for Early Childhood that must be adhered to in Florida and many other states.)

15. Special Needs Schools (When applicable)

Special Needs schools are those schools whose mission, objective, student population and goals require substantially different curriculum and instructional strategies. These may include schools for exceptional education of all kinds. Schools must be governed by the NIPSA accreditation criteria as outlined in Sections 1-13 of the *NIPSA Accreditation Manual, Directions for the School*. In addition, schools must adhere to all local, state and national requirements that may apply to their operation.

16. Health and Safety

The well-being of children is one of the most important elements of sound educational management. Every school must provide a safe and healthy environment for teaching and learning, and the school must provide evidence that it meets all of the requirements for health and safety in their local community as well as all local, state and federal laws and regulations that are applicable. Policies and/or procedural guidelines to ensure the health and safety of students, the staff, and visitors to the school must be implemented and are being practiced, and the school has plans for responding to emergencies and crises. Schools must adhere to the health and safety inspections related to their programs and county requirements. Proof of inspections are filed and included in the accreditation self-study. Suitability of the facilities for program implementation and safety features are also included in the accreditation self-study. NIPSA schools must meet all federal, state and local laws and regulations that may apply to their particular circumstances.

CRITERIA FOR THERAPEUTIC CERTIFICATION

Emotional growth and therapeutic programs shall be evaluated on the basis of the degree to which it is accomplishing its purposes and functions as outlined in its own statement of objectives and on the appropriateness of those purposes and functions for an institution of its type.

In addition, to qualify for certification, an institution must give evidence of adequately meeting the following criteria that are established as general guidelines to determine the effectiveness of a program's educational program and services.

The program shall have:

1. *General Data*

Current statistical information must be supplied.

2. *Purpose, Philosophy and Goals*

A statement of philosophy approved by the governing body of the institution must be included. Goals and objectives, consistent with the philosophy, shall be systematically developed and reviewed by the administration and staff, and are to be shared often with the clients and institutional community. There shall be a continual evaluation of progress toward these goals and objectives. An annual report should be filed each year as well as an interim report during the fourth year of certification. NIPSA reserves the right to conduct unannounced program visitations at the institution's expenses when it is deemed necessary by NIPSA and the Vice-President for Therapeutic Programs.

3. *Governance and Leadership*

The institution must have a clearly defined and demonstrable organizational structure for the effective implementation of the institution's goals and objectives. This structure should specify: the functions of the administration, staff and clients; the administrative relationship among these groups; and the limits of authority and responsibility.

4. *Procedures*

The study must describe the procedures that are employed to accomplish the mission and should include charting, treatment planning and other clinical procedures. Safety will be evaluated, as well.

5. *Personnel*

A description of all those charged with the responsibility to carry out the mission must be evaluated.

6. *Other Certifications*

Verification of other certification and accreditations must be described.

7. *Medical Policies*

A complete description of the medical policies of the program must be included.

8. *Methods of Self-Evaluation*

The program must explain how continual self-evaluation is part of the program.

9. *Office Procedures*

Business procedures must be described.

10. *Dormitories and Housing*

A complete evaluation of the physical plant, student safety and supervisory policies must be described.

11. *Patron Relations*

A supportive patron community is encouraged to share its ideas and recommendations and, when invited, actively participate in prescribed areas of the institution.

12. *Site*

The institution's plant and physical facilities enable the staff to effectively implement the program. All institutional facilities must be in compliance with all state and federal laws, and must adhere to all fire and safety codes and regulations of the community in which they are located.

13. *Finance*

Continuing financial support is adequate to provide staff, physical facilities, instructional resources, and other support services necessary to operate an effective emotional growth or therapeutic program. Budgetary planning should involve those who are responsible for implementing the program and services. All personnel should be covered by liability insurance.

14. *Institutional Improvement*

As part of the self-study the institution will prepare an improvement plan (IP) or Strategic Plan. The program improvement committee shall represent the community and may employ a model that is appropriate for the institution and its mission. The plan should analyze data from the self-study and other sources to determine the present state of the program and to develop objectives and action plans to improve student learning.

A two-day visit to the program will be conducted by a committee of peers in order to verify the accuracy of the report and to confirm that the program is doing what it says it is doing.

15. *Health and Safety*

Section 16.0 (above in the Academic requirements) must be adhered to.

POLICY REGARDING REVOCATION AND PROBATION OF ACCREDITATION AND CERTIFICATION

1. The Commission on Standards and Review may revoke the accreditation or certification of a school or program or may impose a period of probation.
2. Unless another standard is specified, all decisions made and actions taken by the Commission, any committee or any staff member, shall be at the discretion of the Commission, committee or staff member.
3. The Executive Director or any member of the Board of Directors may present information to the Vice President of the relevant division indicating that a revocation of accreditation or certification or that the imposition of probation of accreditation or certification may be appropriate. The Vice President shall coordinate with NIPSA staff to take one or more of these actions:
 - a. seek and receive information from such sources as seem appropriate.
 - b. communicate with the school, program or other persons.
 - c. identify the issues or circumstances which are being considered.
 - d. request cooperation, information or documents.
 - e. provide to the school or program an opportunity to present such information or explanation as it reasonably desires to present.
 - f. appoint a committee of board members, with the consent of the Commission, to gather information, communicate with such persons and institutions as seem appropriate, or to visit the school or program.
4. The Vice President or the committee, if any, may at any time recommend to the Commission that no action will taken in regard to the accreditation or certification or the school or program.
5. The accredited or certified school or program shall be responsible for any travel costs and related expenses incurred by staff, officers or members of any committee. The school or program shall advance or otherwise secure these costs in advance to the satisfaction of NIPSA. The school or program shall have no obligation to pay or compensate any person for time devoted to any issue.
6. In making any decision to revoke accreditation or certification, the commission shall apply the same standard it would use in voting to re-accredit or re-certify the school or program. Should the Commission decide that the school or program can correct or cure the matter within a reasonable time, then the Commission may vote to change the status to "Accredited on Probation." A decision to place the school or program on probation shall include the reasons the probation was imposed, the steps required in order

to cure or correct the situation, and the time allowed for cure or correction.

7. All decisions of the Commission shall be promptly communicated to the school or program.

8. In reaching any decision, the Commission, officers, staff and committees are not limited by rules of evidence that might be applied in a judicial or administrative proceeding. They may consider evidence and information from such sources and in such form as they consider to be reliable and appropriate. The Commission may consider evidence or reports and may deliberate and vote in the same ways that it does when deciding to re-accredit or re-certify. The school or program shall have no right to a live hearing, to a plenary meeting of the Commission, or to confront witnesses.

9. The decision of the Commission is final. No rehearing or appeal is available.

PART II

EVALUATIVE CRITERIA FOR SCHOOL ACCREDITATION

A GUIDE FOR THE PREPARATION OF THE SCHOOL SELF-STUDY REPORT

When writing the report, remember to keep the numbering the same as it is in this guide for each section and for each item. Answer each question as fully as possible and whenever possible put the supporting material following that section. Descriptions and responses can be as brief or extensive as needed so as to be helpful to the school during the self-study process and to the NIPSA visiting committee. Two types of support materials are requested: those that should be included in this report and those that should be kept at the school for review by the committee. Both types are clearly indicated at the end of this section of the guide and as indicated below.

Please prepare this report as a Word document or PDF document so as to be able to send it to the various destinations as an email attachment. If there are many documents and you want to attach additional items to the report, it is also appropriate to send the documents in Dropbox. Adobe (PDF) and Dropbox are both available on the Internet and can be downloaded at no cost.

The Self-Study should be available for at least one month before the Site Committee visit. Copies must be sent to the national office, the site committee chair and all members of the visiting committee.

All questions should be directed to the Site Committee Chairman.

Before beginning the writing process, have a meeting with all people concerned with the preparation and list priorities of time and assignments. Be sure to keep a regular progress check on the Self-Study and time schedule.

Make your student and parent community aware of what you are doing.

You are about to embark upon an important process for your school and its community.. Once you have completed it, your school will never be the same, only better. Good luck and remember that we are here to help you succeed.

Please note that in the following criteria, *items in Bold Italics and underlined are to be included in an appendix to the Self-Study Report*, and *items in Bold Italics only are to be presented to the visiting committee in a supplementary file so that they can be easily evaluated during the visit.*

1.0 General Data

This section should include all of the current statistical information for the school.

1.1 Pertinent Information

School _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone: _____ Fax _____

Name and Title of Head of School: _____

Type of School: _____

Preschool Elementary (Enter Grades) _____

Middle/Junior _____ (Grades) High : (Grades) _____

Organizational Structure

1.1.1 Describe the school's classroom organization (i.e. self-contained, departmental, non-graded, etc.)

1.1.2 Enrollment (as of October 1st of the current school year) _____

1.1.3 Enrollment Three Years Ago _____

1.1.4 Present a brief history of the school.

1.2 School Promotional Information, Admissions and Records

- 1.2.1 List methods used to give the community and parents of prospective students information about the school. **Append school brochures or catalogues. Include other materials in a supplementary file.**
- 1.2.2 List the distinguishing characteristics that attract students to your school. Briefly describe admissions procedures. Please include entrance requirements, tests used, and other screening procedures.
- 1.2.3 All NIPSA schools are required to have an anti-discrimination policy. Briefly describe how your policy is made public and how is it published. **Include copies in your appendix.**
- 1.2.4 If needed, list short and long term plans to implement changes in promotional and admissions programs.
- 1.2.5 Compare present enrollment with school capacity.
- 1.2.6 If the school is planning to grow what is the potential for enrolling new students?
- 1.2.7 Describe how student progress is reported to parents. **(Include a copy of report card or other reporting instruments in appendix.)**
- 1.2.8 Describe the system used to request records from a former school and to transfer student records from your school to student's next school. **Include request/transmittal forms in appendix.**
- 1.2.9 How are student and personnel records protected against fire, theft, vandalism, etc.? (It is required that adequate protection of school records be evident.)
- 1.2.10 Are all required governmental permits and inspection reports current? **Include a copy of them in the appendix and supplementary file.**
- 1.2.11 Describe methods taken to provide data security.

1.3 Geographical Community

- 1.3.1 What community or city does your school serve?
- 1.3.2 **Include a map (county or city road map acceptable) in the supplementary materials file showing school and area served.**
- 1.3.3 How are children transported to school? Indicate approximate percentages.
 Parents: _____ Car Pools: _____ Bus: _____
 Public Conveyance: _____ Walk or Bike: _____
 Other: _____
- 1.3.4 What demographic changes are occurring in the community your school serves? How do you believe these changes will affect your school?

2.0 Philosophy and Goals

2.1 **Append a Copy of the School's Philosophy**

- 2.1.1 What is the date of adoption?
- 2.1.2 How does the school review philosophy and goals in order to keep them relevant?
- 2.1.3 Date of Last Revision of Philosophy and Goals: _____
- 2.2 To what extent did the groups listed below help in developing the school's stated goals?

	Deeply Involved		Not Involved
2.21 Proprietor			
2.22 Administrators			
2.23 Teachers			
2.24 Students			
2.25 Parents			
2.26 Other (Specify)			

- 2.2 How is the school community informed about philosophy and goals? (Staff, parents, students, others)
- 2.3 Describe by example how each of the following developmental goals are implemented in a traditional or unique way:
- 2.10.1 Intellectual
- 2.10.2 Physical
- 2.10.3 Social
- 2.10.4 Personal

3.0 Organization and Leadership

- 3.1 **Append An Organizational Chart**
 Show lines of authority and communication.

3.2 Describe how school policies are determined, implemented and revised.

3.3 Does the school have written policies covering the following areas?

Note the degree of implementation by marking 1 (not implemented) to 5 (fully implemented), and document or comment depending on the existence of policy. **Include policies and procedures manual in appendix or supplementary file.**

Implementations:

		1	2	3	4	5
3.3.1	Policy Making					
3.3.2	Handling controversial issues and complaints through the proper channels					
3.3.3	Personnel practices, including job description					
3.3.4	Selection of instructional materials					
3.3.5	Selection of library materials					
3.3.6	Use of school equipment and facilities					
3.3.7	Curriculum development					
3.3.8	Student discipline					
3.3.9	Staff Development					
3.3.10	Staff Evaluation					
3.3.11	Purchasing of materials and supplies					
3.3.12	Hiring and firing of personnel					

3.4 Describe the working relationship between the school proprietor and administrative staff.

3.5 Describe the working relationship between administrative staff, faculty and support staff.

3.6 Describe how the school administration works to create a climate of cooperation and mutual respect between members of the instructional and support staffs.

3.7 List each member of the administrative staff by name and title and briefly describe the responsibilities of each.

3.8 Is the administrative staff sufficient to meet the needs of the school in implementing the school philosophy and goals? Explain.

3.9 Describe how the administrative staff performs the following functions and evaluate their effectiveness:

3.9.1 Develops and administers school policy

3.9.2 Provides, supervises and participates in staff development program;

3.9.3 Evaluates teaching and job performance;

3.9.4 Communicates and counsels with staff, students and parent community;

3.9.5 Builds climate for good staff and student morale;

3.9.6 Directs the curriculum development program;

3.9.7 Evaluates the learning program;

3.9.8 Provides orientation for new teachers;

3.9.9 Supervises plant use and maintenance; and

3.9.10 Manages school business.

3.9.11 Please describe any additional duties that you may feel important.

If the school uses an employee observation or evaluation instrument, please append

3.11 Explain how the administrative staff encourages innovations and reasonable experimentation in the education program?

3.12 To what extent does the administrative staff provide opportunity for staff members to participate in decisions making?

3.13 List the professional organizations to which the school and administrative staff belong.

3.14 Describe methods of communicating news and information to staff, students and parent community. **Include in the supplementary materials file or appendix up to three copies of each: staff bulletins, student notices, parents notices/newsletters, staff meeting agenda, parent meeting agenda, and/or school newsletter.**

4.0 Curriculum

4.1 Describe how the school organized for leadership in curriculum development and supervision.

4.2 Explain how the curriculum is monitored by school leaders.

4.3 Describe faculty, student and parent input/involvement in curriculum development and assessment.

4.4 Explain the decision-making procedures in curriculum matters.

4.5 Has the curriculum changed within the past three years? Explain.

4.6 What areas of the curriculum are in need of change or additional emphasis?

4.7 Describe plans to bring about needed changes or additions.

4.8 Describe, for at least one academic area, how articulation is assured from grade level to grade level (example: math for 1st, 3rd and 5th), or from division to division (example: language arts for Early Childhood, elementary and middle school.) Choose any area of academic emphasis. Identify one or more specific areas of instruction (example: math geometry, or language arts - writing), and include goals, activities, texts, or other learning materials, and provide or describe some samples of performance.)

- 4.8.1 Identify specific areas of instruction
- 4.8.2 List goals
- 4.8.3 Include samples of performance objectives (if developed)
- 4.8.4 List and evaluate texts and other learning materials

- 4.9 Describe how the curriculum addresses the academic, social, physical and personal needs of the students.
- 4.10 **Provide to the committee in the supplementary file, the curriculum guide or other descriptive material that spells out the school learning program and shows a continuum of instructional content?**
- 4.11 How does the curriculum guide specify units of instruction, instructional strategies, materials and methods of student assessment for each course or grade level offered?
- 4.12 **Make available to the site committee in the supplementary materials any other materials that describe the curriculum.**
- 4.13 Compare the curriculum guide, courses of study outlines and course descriptions. Evaluate the agreement between written curricular program and what is actually being taught in the learning program.
- 4.14 Make a general evaluation of curriculum development procedures.
 - 4.14.1 Indicate areas of strength and areas needing improvement.
 - 4.14.2 Comment on any unique or unusual curricular program or procedures.
- 4.15 If this is not a special needs school, describe any unique instructional practices that are employed for any special needs students.
 - 4.15.1 **Include the scope and sequence for these practices in the supplementary file.**
 - 4.15.2 If the school awards a diploma list any requirements that may be unique to this program.
- 4.16 Describe in detail the assessment program.

5.0 Instruction

- 5.1 How do teachers provide for varying interests, abilities and needs of students? Include in your explanation grouping practices or other instructional strategies employed.
- 5.2 If community members and/or resources are used to enrich instruction please describe how they are selected and used.
- 5.3 What measures are used to hold students accountable for doing quality work? Explain.
- 5.4 Is emphasis placed on both cognitive and affective growth of students? Explain
- 5.5 How are instructional materials and resources developed, selected, adapted, maintained and evaluated?
- 5.6 Are there sufficient instructional materials and equipment to meet the school's goals and objectives? What additional materials and equipment would you like to have?
- 5.7 Describe the library service and audio-visual materials available to teachers and students. Evaluate quality and quantity.
- 5.8 How is information technology (computers, television, etc.) used in the learning program?
- 5.9 Are decision-making techniques taught through problem solving and the use of higher level thinking skills? Describe.
- 5.10 Describe the school damage policy regarding replacement of lost or damaged textbooks and other school property.
- 5.11 Describe assistance given teachers in the preparation and use of materials.
- 5.12 Give examples of practical teaching tools and instructional techniques presented to teachers in school in-service programs.
- 5.13 Does the school contract for any "outside" instructional services? Describe. Also describe how "contracted teachers" are integrated with school staff and how they are informed about school philosophy, standards and rules.
- 5.14 Append a copy of school's master daily schedule. Show academic and non-academic time blocks.
- 5.15 Describe the school's practice for instructional continuity when the regular teacher is absent.

6.0 Technology

Technology is employed in a variety of ways in different schools, from offering online courses to students of this school or other schools, complimenting traditional instruction with technology, and providing direct instruction in the use of technology. Not all of the items in this section will be appropriate for every school. Respond to the items that are appropriate and mark those that do not apply as Not Applicable

- 6.1 Describe in detail the school's use of technology, how technology enhances the teaching and learning process, the methods employed and the hardware and software available to the teachers and students.
- 6.2 Describe how the technology infrastructure is effective and sufficient to complement the school's mission and execution of the curriculum.
- 6.3 What technical support services are provided to maintain the educational technology delivery system? How does the school assure that repairs and adjustments are made in a timely manner?
- 6.4 If employed, how does the course architecture permit online teacher to add content, activities and assessments to extend learning opportunities?
- 6.5 Describe how courses accommodate multiple school calendars; e.g., block scheduling, 4X4 and traditional schedules.
- 6.6 Describe methods employed to make courses easy to navigate.
- 6.7 Describe how courses make maximum use of the capabilities of the online medium and make resources available by alternative means; e.g., video, CDs and pod casts.
- 6.8 How are hardware, web browser and software requirements specified?
- 6.9 How are prerequisite skills in the use of technology identified?

- 6.10 How do the courses utilize appropriate content-specific tools and software?
- 6.11 How do interoperability technical standards allow sharing content among different learning management systems?
- 6.12 How do interoperability technical standards ensure sharing of questions, assessments and results with others?
- 6.13 How do courses meet universal design principles to ensure access for all students? (See Section 508 standards, 6.14 Rehabilitation Act [www.section 508.gov/] and World Wide Web Consortium [W3C] Guidelines [www.w3.org].)
- 6.15 How do online textbooks used in a course meet nationally endorsed standards for publishers that ensure distribution of accessible, alternative versions of textbooks and other instructional materials? (See National Instructional Materials Accessibility Standard [NIMAS] www.aim.cast.org.)
- 6.16 How is assistance in technical support and course management provided to a course teacher or school coordinator at a remote location?
- 6.17 If the course provider offers orientation training, describe.
- 6.18 Make results of peer review and student evaluations of courses available in the appendix.
- 6.19 Describe how course effectiveness is evaluated.
- 6.20 Describe how courses are updated periodically to ensure timeliness.
- 6.21 Is the course provider of online courses authorized to operate in all states in which the courses are offered?
- 6.22 Describe how course effectiveness is evaluated.
- 6.23 Describe how courses are updated periodically to ensure timeliness.
- 6.24 Is the course provider authorized to operate in all states in which the courses are offered?
- 6.25 If there is a technology department and technician or technicians, describe how this department works with and is integrated into the instructional process.
- 6.26 Describe how technology is utilized as part of school management: e.g., scheduling, accounting, communication, etc.

7.0 Pupil Services and Activities

- 7.1 Services
 - 7.1.1 What resources and specialists within the school and community are available for counseling?
 - 7.1.2 Describe the techniques and tools used to identify the special needs of children. Explain how these are implemented.
 - 7.1.3 Describe the testing program, including provisions made for interpretation of data to staff, parents and students.
 - 7.1.4 **Include samples of tests and schedules in the supplementary materials file.**
 - 7.1.5 Describe the guidance and counseling program.
 - 7.1.6 Describe school discipline practices. Are they consistent with school policies? **Append school behavior code.**
 - 7.1.7 Explain briefly suspension and expulsion procedures, and provisions, if any for re-admittance.
 - 7.1.8 What specific health services does the school offer? Describe the health services facility. What improvements, if any, would you like to make?
 - 7.1.9 Describe the school's drug awareness program. **Please include materials in the supplementary file or appendix.**
 - 7.1.10 Describe the school's food service or lunch program.
 - 7.1.11 Does the school provide transportation service? If so, describe the program and the loading and unloading areas.
 - 7.1.12 Describe the procedures employed for the supervision of children during bus and private vehicle loading and unloading.
 - 7.1.13 **Please include a copy of the school's written disaster plan in the supplementary file.**
- 7.2 Activities
 - 7.2.1 Does the school have a service and/or leadership training program such as a student government? If so, describe.
 - 7.2.2 Describe any after school student enrichment classes or workshops that the school may provide?
 - 7.2.3 Describe any intramural or interscholastic sports programs that the school may offer?
 - 7.2.4 What kind of extracurricular and social activities does the school sponsor?
 - 7.2.5 Describe, from the administration and faculty perspective, the strengths and weaknesses of the student activities program, including limiting factors that interfere with the development of the program.
 - 7.2.6 If the school publishes a school yearbook or annual, how involved are students in its development? **Include a copy of the school yearbook in the supplementary materials file.**
 - 7.2.7 Survey students (third grade and up) for their opinion about their school, including, but not restricted to, services and activities. (See NIPSA suggestions for questionnaires in the appendix.) **Include individual questionnaires in the supplementary materials file.**

8.0 School Staff

8.1 Faculty

- 8.1.1 How are faculty members involved in the selection and orientation of new teachers and other members of the instructional staff?
- 8.1.2 What incentives, other than contractual salary, are given to the instructional staff for successful fulfillment of their duties and responsibilities? What employee benefits does the school provide?
- 8.1.3 Indicate the percentage of turnover in the instructional staff in the last three years. Explain the reason for the turnover.

- 8.1.4 To what extent does the instructional staff contribute to the identification of problems related to the instructional program of the school and how active are teachers in seeking their solution? Explain.
- 8.1.5 What are some of the morale boosting activities provided faculty and staff members?
- 8.1.6 If applicable, describe how the school utilizes volunteers.
- 8.1.7 Do faculty members attend off campus workshops and seminars? Describe your policy and staff participation.
- 8.1.8 What non-instructional or extra-curricular assignments are given to teachers? To what extent do teachers have a say in the assignment?
- 8.1.9 Summarize faculty's opinion as to how consistently and effectively the school administrative staff handles referred student discipline problems.
- 8.1.10 Request that all faculty and staff members complete a staff questionnaire dealing with the school plant and facilities. Summarize and evaluate the results. ***Include completed questionnaires in supplementary file.***
- 8.1.11 ***Provide in the supplementary materials*** a list of all instructional personnel that includes the members' names, position and qualification. Qualifications must include (but are not limited to): degrees held, major, college or university, certificate number (if applicable), years at school and total years experience. (See sample form on p. 24)

8.2 Support Staff

- 8.2.1 Are the lines of authority well defined? Explain.
- 8.2.2 Describe the ways in which two-way communication with administration is established and maintained?
- 8.2.3 If there is a job description available for each job, how were the job descriptions developed and how are they kept up to date? ***Include job descriptions in appendix.***
- 8.2.4 Who makes daily job assignments?
- 8.2.5 If additional employees may be needed to accomplish the work necessary for the smooth operation of the school, how would they be utilized?
- 8.2.6 Describe the support staff in-service training program.
- 8.2.7 How are the work performances of individuals evaluated? Is evaluation discussed with the employees?
- 8.2.8 If the school gives preference to promotion from within, how is information regarding all job openings made available?

9.0 The Parent Community

Please describe in detail the role and the extent to which parents are involved in the life of the school. Include the following topics:

- 9.1 If there is a parent organization, describe its structure and its relationship to the school program.
- 9.2 Other than a parent organization, is there a parent participation program (library aides, office helpers, playground supervisors, room mothers, etc)?
- 9.3 How effective and valuable to the school is this? If you do not provide such an opportunity, why was that decision made?
- 9.4 Does the school encourage the parent community to share its recommendations and concerns with the school? How? If not, why not?
- 9.5 If parent recommendations are being used, describe how.
- 9.6 Is the parent community involved in (and, if so, how):
 - 9.6.1 Curriculum development
 - 9.6.2 Student activities
 - 9.6.3 Selection of textbooks
 - 9.6.4 Fund raising projects
 - 9.6.5 Helping solve school problems
 - 9.6.6 Interpreting and promoting the school's program in the community at large
 - 9.6.7 Evaluating the school program
 - 9.6.8 Any other ways the parent community is involved

Distribute the Parent Questionnaire to the school parents. (See suggestions in the appendix.) ***Summarize and evaluate results. Include copies of individual surveys in the supplementary file.***

10.0 School Plant: Building and Grounds

10.1 Describe the suitability of the following facilities in relation to implementing the school program. Consider whether the physical plant facilitates or obstructs the attainment of goals. Consider lighting, heating, ventilation and acoustic factors, and indicate strengths and weaknesses. Consider the safety of the students and faculty and how the physical plant impacts the mission, educational program and goals of the school.

- 10.1.1 Classrooms and other indoor learning areas, including labs.
- 10.1.2 Multi-purpose rooms and large assembly areas
- 10.1.3 Playground/athletic and other outdoor recreational areas.

- 10.1.4 Staff room, lounge or working area.
- 10.1.5 Other areas pertaining to learning program.
- 10.1.6 Offices, such as administration, counseling, admissions, and attendance and nurse.
- 10.1.7 Storage areas (indoor and outdoor).
- 10.1.8 Restrooms (student and staff).
- 10.1.9 Drinking fountains.
- 10.1.10 Custodial and maintenance work and storage areas.
- 10.1.11 Dining areas.

- 10.2 Describe the general safety features that have been incorporated in the school plant.
- 10.3 Describe any extraordinary facilities requirements that may be necessary in this school.
- 10.4 What improvements to the school facility have been made during the last three years?
- 10.5 Are teachers and other staff involved in planning for new structures and remodeling of present facilities? Explain.
- 10.6 Describe the use of school facilities by community groups such as girl scouts, churches, etc.
- 10.7 Discuss custodial and maintenance programs in terms of personnel, supplies and equipment, cleanliness, time of response to work requests, and quality of daily housekeeping details.
- 10.8 **Append a plot map of school showing all major buildings, playgrounds and parking areas.**
- 10.9 How much attention is given to landscaping and the outdoor environment? Does it facilitate or obstruct flow, educational needs, and overall attractiveness? Explain.

11.0 Finance

- 11.1 If a school has a working budget, who prepares and oversees the budget? Explain budgeting procedures and controls.
- 11.2 **A school shall have a financial statement or accountant's letter available for the site committee chairperson.**
- 11.3 Describe your tuition plan and policies, and **append tuition and fee schedule.**
- 11.4 If the school has a financial contingency fund or plan, please describe.
- 11.5 What kinds of insurance does the school carry? Include copies coverage declarations and/or endorsements in appendix.
 - 11.5.1 Does the school business insurance provide for loss to its clients?
 - 11.5.2 Student accident insurance
 - 11.5.3 Workman's compensation insurance
 - 11.5.4 Professional liability, liability, and insurance for all buildings and facilities used by students and staff.
- 11.6 Salaries:
 - 11.6.1 Do you use teacher contracts? **If so, include a copy of the form in the appendix.**
 - 11.6.2 How do you establish teachers' starting salaries and determine pay increases? Please indicate below:
 - Published salary scale. (Please append.)
 - Individually, depending mostly on performance.
 - Other (please explain) _____

12.0 Dormitories And Dormitory Life

As life in a boarding school is integral to the overall development of the student, the aspects of that life must be evaluated as part of the entire student experience. The school must exhibit that care has been taken to plan for and implement policies that provide for the affective development and safety of the child in his or her relationships with adults and other students.

12.1 STATEMENT OF BOARDING PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE

- 12.1.1 A suitable statement of the school's boarding principles and practice is available to parents and staff, is made known to boarders, and is seen to work in practice.
- 12.1.2 Rules and procedures governing dormitory life, leaves, privileges and discipline are published so that students, parents and staff know them. *(Include copies in the appendix.)*

12.2 ADMISSIONS POLICIES

- 12.2.1 Describe the admissions policies for new borders and the criteria used to determine suitability.
- 12.2.2 Describe the guidance practices for boarders. Are there persons assigned to help in orientation and counseling?
- 12.2.3 Describe the ways in which a boarder can contact an administrative person not immediately associated with dormitory in case of an issue.

12.3 – HEALTH AND WELLBEING

- 12.3.1 Describe how physical and mental health issues are addressed within the boarding setting.

- 12.3.2 Describe the infirmary or other appropriate accommodation to care for sick or injured students.
- 12.3.3 Describe access to medical personnel, if necessary.
- 12.3.4 Describe emergency services and hospitalization policies and procedures. Describe the process if and when a critical emergency arises.
- 12.3.5 Describe the school's policies for administering prescribed or OTC drugs.
- 12.3.6 Describe how personnel are trained in HIPAA responsibilities.

12.4 – CONTACT WITH PARENTS AND/OR GUARDIANS

- 12.4.1 Describe the policies about contacting parents or guardians.
- 12.4.2 Explain how parents are notified about dormitory conduct, social progress and general behavior in the non-classroom setting. *(Include copies of reports and policies in the appendix.)*

12.5 –ACCOMMODATIONS

- 12.5.1 Describe room and sleeping accommodations and arrangements.
- 12.5.2 Explain how studying and leisure time is accommodated during non school hours.
- 12.5.3 Describe how the personal needs of students are provided including washing, showering and use of toilets.
- 12.5.4 There are accommodations for the disabled. Describe.
- 12.5.5 Describe how various age or gender groups are arranged.
- 12.5.6 Describe how students are allowed to personalize their living areas. Describe the policies.

12.6 – SAFETY

- 12.6.1 Describe the policies regarding health and safety for dormitory living.
- 12.6.2 The school ensures that the welfare of pupils at the school is safeguarded and promoted. Show how this is implemented *by attaching a written risk assessment policy* and how the administration typically responds to its findings.
- 12.6.3 Describe any use of surveillance equipment (e.g. cameras) or security patrolling of school buildings or grounds.

12.7 – FIRE AND CRISIS PRECAUTIONS AND DRILLS

- 12.7.1 Discuss how fire and crisis drills are conducted in accordance with local fire department regulations and a **written record of the drills is kept, both for school time and while students are in boarding facilities.** *(Include copies of the Crisis Management Plan in the appendix.)*

12.8 – FOOD SERVICE

- 12.8.1 Describe the food service arrangements and policies.
- 12.8.2 Explain how the needs of students with special dietary considerations are met.
- 12.8.3 Explain how water is made available throughout the school at all times
- 12.8.4 Describe the measures used to meet the needs of the physically disabled.
- 12.8.5 Describe the qualifications of the food service staff.
- 12.8.6 Describe how the food service meets local and state requirements.

12.9 – PERSONAL POSSESSIONS

- 12.9.1 Describe the laundry provisions for boarders.
- 12.9.3 How is reasonable protection provided for boarders' personal possessions, money and other valuables?
- 12.9.4. Describe the school's search policies if any

12.10 – ACTIVITIES AND FREE TIME

- 12.10.1 Describe the range and choice of activities for boarders outside teaching time, including sufficient and suitably timed free time each day provided? How is this supervised?
- 12.10.2 Explain the range and choices of safe indoor and outdoor recreational areas to which students have access.
- 12.10.3 What is the policy regarding boarders seeking privacy if they wish?
- 12.10.4 Describe how students are provided the opportunity to practice their religion?
- 12.10.5 What kinds of social activities are provided or encouraged?
- 12.10.6 What are the policies and provisions for field trips?

12.11 – STAFFING AND SUPERVISION

- 12.11.1 For all staff members or volunteers employed or volunteering in a position working with boarders provide the following: a job description reflecting their duties, when and what kind of training in boarding have they received, all regular reviews of their boarding practices, and any opportunities for training and continual professional development in boarding that they have received.
- 12.11.2 How is the role of spouses, partners and/or other adult members of staff households within boarding houses made clear?
- 12.11.3 Explain how the staff supervises boarders outside teaching time. Are they sufficient in number, training and experience for the age, number and needs of boarders, and the locations and activities involved?
- 11.11.4 Are boarders at all times under the responsibility of an identified member of staff who is suitably qualified and experienced? Describe.

- 12.11.5 How does staff know the whereabouts of boarders (or know how to find their whereabouts) in their charge at all times?
- 12.11.6 Describe the policy and procedure if a boarder should go missing.
- 12.11.7 Describe the overnight monitoring of students well-being.
- 12.11.8 Explain how boarders have the means of contacting a member of staff at night.
- 12.11.9 Describe how background checks on all staff meet state and local requirements.

12.12 – EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

- 12.12.1 Demonstrate that the school's equal opportunity policies are extended to the boarding division and how they are explained and enforced.

12.13 – COMPLAINTS

- 12.13.1 How are boarders encouraged to make legitimate concerns known to school personnel not associated with the dormitory?
- 12.13.2 Describe the school's policy for recording and responding to complaints.
- 12.13.3 Describe the written record of complaints that identifies those complaints relating to boarding, and include action taken by the school as a result of those complaints?

12.14 – STUDENT LEADERSHIP

- 12.14.1 Describe any system that gives specific duties and responsibilities that are appropriate for students, with adequate staff supervision, training and measures to counter possible abuses of the role.

12.15 – LODGINGS (AWAY FROM SCHOOL)

- 12.15.1 Describe the policy and the precautions taken for use by staff and students during extended trips away from school, and how the well-being of student is protected.

12.16 – LODGINGS IN PRIVATE HOMES AND OTHER NON-SCHOOL OWNED OR CONTROLLED FACILITIES

- 12.16.1 Describe in detail any lodging arrangements that are not directly under the control of the school proper (i.e. lodging in private homes, faculty homes, etc.
- 12.16.2 How have Items 12.1 through 12.15 (above) been implemented in any arrangement made in this manner so as to fully provide for the well being and safety of students.

13.0 School Improvement Plan

As part of the self-study the school will prepare a school improvement plan (SIP) that focuses on student achievement and learning and other student based outcomes (such as affective behavior, health and school climate.) The school improvement committee should represent the school community and may employ a model that is appropriate for the school and its mission. The plan should analyze data from the self-study and other sources to determine the present state of the school and to develop objectives and action plans to improve student learning.

As an SIP is an ongoing document it is expected that previous plans will have been reported upon and have been updated to reflect successes and opportunities for continued growth. Keep in mind that any school can improve; the SIP only provides the school with a blueprint for improvement and continued success.

A COPY OF THE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN OR STRATEGIC PLAN MUST BE INCLUDED WITH THIS REPORT. KEEP IN MIND THAT THIS REPORT MUST FOCUS ON IMPROVED STUDENT OUTCOMES.

- 13.1 How have various members of the school community participated in and contributed to the development of the School Improvement Plan?
- 13.2 How have the school's strengths and weaknesses been analyzed?
- 13.3 How have challenges and opportunities presented from the internal and external environments been evaluated as a prelude to planning? (The internal; community is the immediate community of the school - its parents, patrons, students, staff and administration; the external forces are those which are occurring outside the internal community – in the city, state, nation and the world.)
- 13.4 How does the school collect adequate data to determine student achievement and progress?
- 13.5 What comparisons are made to determine student progress?
- 13.6 How has the school set and prioritized goals? How are goal statements made clear to all?
- 13.7 How has staff research and locally collected data been utilized to determine actions to be taken?
- 13.8 What time lines have been set for action plans?
- 13.9 How is progress being monitored?
- 13.10 What effects (positive or negative) have been observed of student performance? How is this determined?

A copy of the school improvement plan should be included with the school self-study report and in the supplementary file.

14.0 – Early Childhood Programs

In addition to the criteria described in Sections 1-12 above, the following criteria, particular to early childhood programs, will be observed. Schools should keep in mind that in many communities law often dictates the requirements for early childhood education. In addition to the requirements below, schools must meet all local, state and national requirements that may apply to their individual circumstances. Schools must also meet any state requirements for early childhood programs if the school is participating in a state-supported program.

14.1 Administration

- 14.1.1 Does the early childhood director have professional training and experience that meets the requirements of the jurisdictions in which the school operates?
- 14.1.2 Are hiring practices commensurate with the school's non-discriminatory policy and designed to screen out undesirable candidates?
- 14.1.3 Are personnel records safely maintained and kept confidential?
- 14.1.4 Describe orientation policies for the early childhood staff.
- 14.1.5 Include copies of the employee handbook, parent handbook and other pertinent publications in the supplementary materials.
- 14.1.6 Describe how the evaluations of teachers and aides are conducted.
- 14.1.7 Are children's health and other pertinent records kept in a safe and confidential way?
- 14.1.8 Describe the duties and responsibilities of the administrator in charge of the early childhood program.

Include promotional literature and other public relations materials in the supplementary file.

14.2 - Personnel

- 14.2.1 Do the qualifications of instructional and support staff meet the requirements of civil authorities?
- 14.2.2 Describe the qualifications of the early childhood staff.
- 14.2.3 Describe the school's in-service and staff development programs.
- 14.2.4 Do child/staff ratios meet the requirements of the local, state or federal laws that are applicable to the school?

14.3 - Curriculum

- 14.3.1 Include a copy of the early childhood curriculum guide and scope and sequence in the supplementary materials.
- 14.3.2 Describe how the school conducts large and small group instruction, mixed age group instruction and quiet times.
- 14.3.3 Describe materials (including print materials) and equipment that are provided for this age group.
- 14.3.4 How is discipline carried out?
- 14.3.5 Describe how art, music and other creative activities are integrated into the program.
- 14.3.6 Describe how the school evaluates and reports student progress.

14.4 - Nutrition and Food Services

- 14.4.1 If food is prepared on the premises, is the program in compliance with the requirements of civil authorities for food storage, preparation, and service?
- 14.4.2 Is food brought from home stored appropriately?
- 14.4.3 Is there a clean and comfortable eating area?

14.5 - Physical Environment

- 14.4.1 Does the physical environment of the program provide sufficient lighting, good ventilation, and a comfortable temperature?
- 14.4.2 Are classrooms suitable and safe for the age and activities of the children in the program?
- 14.4.3 Are sinks and toilets readily available?
- 14.4.4 Are there adequate outdoor play and activity areas?
- 14.4.5 Describe how outdoor play activities are supervised.

14.6 - Health and Safety

- 14.6.1 ***Include in the supplementary materials evidence of all licenses and approvals regarding the health and safety of children that have been required and provided by the jurisdiction in which the school operated.***
- 14.6.2 Describe how the school maintains emergency information for each child.
- 14.6.3 Describe the policy used when children become ill or are injured.
- 14.6.4 How are medications handled?
- 14.6.5 Describe arrival and departure procedures.
- 14.6.6 Are first-aid materials available?

14.7 – Family and Community Relations

- 14.7.1 Describe the policies regarding parent visits and observations.
- 14.7.2 Describe and ***include in the supplementary materials*** the policies regarding parent reports and conferences.
- 14.7.3 How are significant changes in a child's behavior or physical condition reported?

15.0 Special Needs Schools

Special Needs schools are those schools whose mission, objective, student population and goals require substantially different curriculum and instructional strategies, but that are not described as therapeutic. These may include schools for exceptional education of all kinds. Schools must be governed by the NIPSA accreditation criteria as outlined in Sections 1-13 of the *NIPSA Accreditation Manual, Directions for the School*. In addition, schools must adhere to all local, state and national requirements that may apply to their operation. This Section does not apply to schools that are specifically therapeutic in nature. Those school must complete Part III of the Self Study protocol.

15.1 – Corporate Status The corporate status of the school is clearly defined. There are no legal or proprietary ambiguities in ownership, control, or responsibility. Partnerships and/or any corporate linkages are expressed as enforceable agreements; and the school is approved for its operations by the civil authority within whose jurisdiction it is located.

15.1.1 *Include in the supplementary materials all legal documents that define and describe the corporate status of the school. (i.e., Articles of Incorporation, Franchise Agreements, Proprietary Registration, Partnership Agreement, etc.) Include licenses and permits that may apply.*

15.1.2 Describe any advisory board or legal counsel that the school may employ for this program.

15.2 – Financial Adequacy

15.2.1 Describe any departures from those financial requirements enumerated in 10.0 Finance, above.

15.3 – Educational Services

15.3.1 *Include in the supplementary materials any departures from a traditional program that are unique to the school's program.*

15.3.2 Describe unique instructional practices that are employed for this population.

15.3.3 Include the scope and sequence for each area of learning in the supplementary file.

15.3.4 If the school awards a diploma include the requirements that may differ from the normal requirements.

15.4 – Advertising And Marketing

15.4.1 *Include copies of all marketing, promotional and informational materials in the supplementary file.*

15.5 – Educational Staff

15.5.1 Describe special training requirements that may be necessary for this population.

15.5.2 Describe the staff qualifications.

15.5.3 How are staff members evaluated for performance?

15.5.4 How are staff records and files safely stored and confidential?

15.6 – Admissions And Placement Procedures

15.6.1 Describe the admissions process for students in this population.

15.6.2 Do admissions documents and applications reflect the school's non-discriminatory practices?

15.7 – Management And Supervision

15.7.1 Describe work schedules, staff development, and appointment and termination practices.

15.7.2 *Include policy and procedures manuals and/or employee handbooks in the supplementary file.*

15.7.3 Describe any other personnel policies that may differ from the traditional school.

15.8 – Student Attendance And Conduct

15.8.1 Describe the school's discipline policies including attendance, suspension and termination if different for this population.

15.8.2 *Include student and parent handbooks and other policy materials in the supplementary file.*

15.9 – Counseling, Records And Follow-Up

15.9.1 Describe the counseling program employed for this population.

15.9.2 How are student records protected?

15.9.3 Does the school follow all applicable federal, state and local laws regarding the transmission of records?

15.9.4 *Include in the supplementary file all forms for recording and reporting that are used for this population.*

15.10 – Communications And Relationships

15.10.1 How are staff members provided the information they need concerning students, parents, school operations, and employment status?

15.10.2 Describe the necessary relationships with other professionals, schools and agencies (i.e. public health, mental health, physicians, and others.)

15.11 – Physical Facilities And Equipment

15.11.1 Describe any extraordinary facilities requirements that may be in addition to Section 9.0 – Facilities, above.

16. HEALTH AND SAFETY

The well-being of children is one of the most important elements of sound educational management. Every school must provide a safe and healthy environment for teaching and learning, and the school must provide evidence that it meets all of the requirements for health and safety in their local community as well as all local, state and federal laws and regulations that are applicable. Policies and/or procedural guidelines to ensure the health and safety of students, the staff, and visitors to the school must be implemented and are being practiced, and the school has plans for responding to emergencies and crises.

16.1 Policies And Procedures

16.1.1 Describe how the administration regularly reviews and updates its written policies and/or procedural guidelines governing the school's provisions for the health and safety of its students, staff, and visitors.

Include Parent, Student and Employee Manuals in the Supplementary Materials.

16.1.2 How does the administration regularly review and update its plans for responding to emergencies and crises? Explain.

Include in the supplementary materials the latest Crisis Management Handbook

16.1.3 Are there written procedures and functional equipment with which to communicate during fire and other emergencies, to summon assistance, and to evacuate the school's facilities?

Provide records in the Supplementary Materials.

16.1.4 Describe how the school conducts drills of its emergency and crisis plans regularly, maintains written records of drills, and based on the health and safety policies and procedures outcomes of the drills, assesses the effectiveness of its plans and revises them accordingly.

16.1.5 Describe the measures taken to check backgrounds of all staff personnel and other persons who come into contact with students.

16.1.6 Describe how the school maintains emergency information for each child.

16.1.7 Are first aid materials conveniently located?

16.1.8 Describe the procedures that have been established to address situations where by a student or students become ill or injured.

Include in the Supplementary Materials or attach in this report evidence of all licenses and approvals regarding the health and safety of children that have been required and provided by the jurisdiction in which the school operates.

16.2 Health Care

16.2.1 Describe how the school provides health care for its students during the school day.

16.2.2 Provide the school's manual in supplementary training for all staff members on implementing the school's emergency and crisis plans, handling accidents and illnesses, and universal precautions for preventing the spread of infectious diseases?

16.2.3 What are the policies and/or procedural guidelines to manage the storage, dispensing and disposal of student medications? Describe.

16.2.4 Describe the policies and/or procedural guidelines for maintaining and sharing medical records and health information of students and members of the staff in compliance with applicable laws.

16.2.5 How does the administration provide staff with current, relevant health, wellness and safety information and practices pertaining to the school's students and staff?

16.2.6 Describe the efforts the school makes to establish working relationships with local health and safety authorities and health service providers.

16.2.7 Describe how the school includes in its educational program and activities opportunities for students to develop knowledge, attitudes and practices necessary for personal wellness and a healthy lifestyle.

16.3 Student Management And Security

16.3.1 How does the school account for the whereabouts of its students at all times?

16.3.2 Describe the system used to control access to the school by visitors and other non-school personnel.

16.3.3 Describe the practices and/or programs that the school has established to promote awareness, prevention, and responsiveness to issues related to the social and emotional well being of the students.

16.3.4 Describe the arrival and departure policies that are in effect for students and parents.

16.4 Policies For Providing Safety During Extra-Curricular Events And Athletics

16.4.1 Describe any provisions for medical needs at school functions that take place away from the school's premises.

16.4.2 How are the health and well-being of student athletes provided? Describe, if applicable.

16.4.3 Describe the policies for safety during transportation to field trips and sporting events.

ITEMS THAT SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN THE SELF-STUDY OR IN THE APPENDIX TO THE SELF-STUDY

- School Brochure and/or Catalogue
- Materials displaying the school's anti-discrimination policy
- Copies of report cards and other reports of student progress
- The transmittal form that is used to request records from other schools

- Transcript forms
- Governmental inspections and permits
- The Master Daily Schedule showing both academic and non-academic time blocks
- A campus map showing classrooms, buildings, playgrounds, parking areas, locations of fire extinguishers and exits
- Tuition and fee schedules
- Copies of proof of insurance (liability and property)
- Teacher contract
- All materials relating to policies and directives that are directed to students.

ITEMS THAT SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN THE SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS FILE

(These materials should be collected in a file and be made available for the visiting committee to peruse in the committee workroom.) Several copies of each should be provided. These items will remain in the school at the end of the visit.

- A map showing the area served
- Employee handbook
- Student and Parent handbook(s)
- Teacher manual
- Staff bulletins
- Student and parent notices
- Newsletters
- Parent meeting agendas
- Staff meeting agendas
- Curriculum Guide (1 copy)
- Catalogues and other curriculum notices
- Copies of Tests used in the testing program
- Drug awareness program
- Written disaster preparedness plan
- School yearbook
- Student surveys and questionnaires
- Parent surveys and questionnaires
- Staff surveys and questionnaires or school climate surveys
- Copy of the early childhood curriculum guide and scope and sequence
- Copies of all licenses required by the jurisdiction in which the school operates
- A description of the parent conference policy for early childhood
- Legal documents that describe and define the corporate status of the school
- Special needs schools must provide descriptive materials that indicates the unique nature of the school, its students and its curriculum
- A copy of the School Improvement Plan
- Disaster Preparedness and Crisis Management Plan
- Job descriptions

PART III

DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF A SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The average size school in the National Independent Private School Association (NIPSA) is 201, and many are very small. The small size is often commensurate with the role or mission of the school. Often, the size of the professional staff may be under 15 teachers and administrators, hardly enough to form a large number of committees or to have the time to do extensive research on test scores and other aspects of student achievement. It is clear that there needs to be a method of creating the School Improvement Plan (SIP) that does not completely divert the attention of the staff from their primary responsibility - teaching children. However, there is much that can be done to develop an SIP that reflects the unique nature of the private school and the important role that it may play in the success of children.

The following pages outline a suggested and preferred method for creating a plan that streamlines the process, yet creates a meaningful plan to guide the growth and development of the school's academic program. It is suggested that this planning process be integrative to (not separate from) the self-study that is normally required for accreditation and that is the basis for the site visit by a committee of peers.

STEPS IN CREATING THE PLAN – AN OUTLINE

The following are the milestones that should be completed in developing the plan. Each of these will be discussed in the pages that follow.

- Development of a vision and core values
- Creation of the mission statement
- Assignment of tasks
- Analysis of external and internal factors affecting the school
- Identification of strengths and weaknesses of the school
- Identify & prioritize areas needing improvement
- Identify measurable objectives
- Identify strategies for improvement
- Create action plans
- Implement the plans
- Monitor, evaluate & update the components of the plan
- Create the annual report

I. DEVELOPMENT OF A VISION AND THE CORE VALUES OF THE SCHOOL

"There's nothing more demoralizing than a leader who can't clearly articulate why we're doing what we're doing." --James Kouzes and Barry Posner

Most educators have in their minds a vision for what constitutes the effective education of young people. Ideas have developed during their time in the classroom, on the athletic fields and in the role of administrator. Very often these ideas are somewhat vague, more akin to "gut feelings." When an educator decides to start a school because he or she wants to "do it right", he or she has probably developed a fairly strong idea about what that school should look like – and feel like. But often they have never put their ideas on to paper. The school improvement process is a chance to do just that.

The vision for a proprietary school is an expression of the passions and expectations of the owner who undertakes the awesome task of building a school from an idea. That idea is the vision, and it is the responsibility of the proprietor to articulate that vision to all the school community. Failure to communicate these beliefs will insure that the vision is never reached.

These are the fundamentals necessary for a vision that excites and motivates people to follow the leader. The vision must:

- Clearly set the organizational direction and purpose;
- Inspire loyalty and caring through the involvement of the entire school community;
- Display and reflect the unique strengths, culture, values, beliefs and direction of the school;
- Inspire enthusiasm, belief, commitment and excitement in all stakeholders;
- Help employees believe that they are part of something bigger than themselves and their daily work;
- Be regularly communicated and shared;

- Challenge people to outdo themselves, to stretch and reach.1

II. CREATION OF THE MISSION STATEMENT

The school's mission statement should be a clear, brief and precise statement of the school's purpose and it should follow from and amplify clearly the vision of the school's management. It might incorporate socially meaningful and measurable criteria addressing concepts such as the moral and ethical beliefs of the school, the public image, the population to be served, the expected outcomes, and expectations for the future. The mission statement should guide the daily activities of the entire school community and be an integral part of everyone's motivation. The statement might be broad enough to express a broad view of the school's mission, or it may be a specific statement of what the school is trying to do for its students and community.

Sample Mission Statements:

The Elephant Sanctuary: "A Natural-Habitat Refuge Where Sick, Old and Needy Elephants Can Once Again Walk The Earth In Peace and Dignity." This is a powerful statement that evokes emotion and instant attachment to the cause of this organization.

Sun Microsystems: "Solve complex network computing problems for governments, enterprises, and service providers."

Ben & Jerry's Ice Cream: "To make, distribute & sell the finest quality all natural ice cream & euphoric concoctions with a continued commitment to incorporating wholesome, natural ingredients and promoting business practices that respect the Earth and the Environment."

Conclusion

So, when you are preparing your Mission Statement remember to make it clear and succinct, incorporating socially meaningful and measurable criteria and consider approaching it from a grand scale. As you create your Mission Statement consider including some or all of the following concepts.

- The moral/ethical position of the school
- The desired public image
- A description of the population served
- The educational philosophy
- The geographical area served
- Expectations for the future

III. ASSIGNING TASKS

The best way to create your SIP is to include as many of the school's faculty and staff as practical, and to include members of the student body and the parental community. However, this is not always possible in every school. The very large school will want to create an efficient way to address the process, and it may not be efficient to include everyone – a limited number of teams may be much more useful. However, efforts should be made to elicit input from all segments of the school population. The small school has a different challenge: there may be too few to create large teams. Individuals may need to take multiple roles in order to prepare the report.

The way the tasks are allocated will most likely depend upon the areas that the school decides to focus upon to bring about student growth in achievement and an improvement in the educational process.

IV. ANALYSIS OF EXTERNAL FACTORS AFFECTING THE SCHOOL

Some of the elements that are important to a school cannot be controlled by the school. However it is vital that the school be aware of the forces at work in the environment that may critically affect the school and its future. Here are just a few of the areas that should be investigated:

- The Changing Social Context – for instance, the vanishing middle class, growing population diversity, new economic realities, single parent families, crime
- The Growth of the Technological World – the effect of virtual education, electronic publishing, too much information, the internet, twitter, texting, iPods ...
- The Fragile Physical Environment – global warming, climate change, rethinking nature, humans and human nature
- The Economic Environment – Recession, depression, trade deficits, local taxation, federal deficits, job losses.
- The Political Environment – The national curriculum and assessment, accreditation, teacher qualifications, school funding policies, vouchers.

This is just a partial list and there may be more specific issues that exist for your school, but if these issues affect your school and the ability of the school to provide good results in the educational program they should be addressed.

V.IDENTIFICATION OF STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF THE SCHOOL

Identifying the school's strengths and shortcomings is probably the most important exercise in the development of the SIP. Weaknesses are the areas that need improvement; strengths provide the strategies and methods for addressing the weaknesses. Here the school must involve the entire school community, for it is impossible for any one individual or management group to identify those areas where improvement may be necessary.

There are a number of ways that strengths and weaknesses can be identified, but it is important to measure how different groups view the climate of the school. Surveys of these groups attitudes and feelings will often give the school a feeling for those things that must be changed.

VI.IDENTIFY & PRIORITIZE AREAS NEEDING IMPROVEMENT

Once the school has identified those areas in need of improvement they should be prioritized. The school should develop a scheme to organize the needs into a form that can serve as the destination in the road map for improvement that the school is now creating. This can take many forms and can be organized around various themes, grade levels or subject areas.

VII.IDENTIFY MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES

Objectives can now be developed that will be the goals of the plan for whatever period the school determines if effective. The important aspect here is to make the objectives measurable. It is of no value to create a goal without a way to determine whether the goal is reached. Typically, when measuring student academic improvement the measure is the results of standardized tests. However, when measuring the effectiveness of a life skills improvement program the results may best be determined by other means: for example, number of detentions, students tardy, absences, etc.

VIII.IDENTIFY STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

In order to reach the school's goals it will be necessary to develop strategies for reaching the goals. What are the specific measures that are to be taken to achieve the objectives?

Use SMART goals to develop your strategies. SMART goals are: S – specific and significant; M - measurable; A - attainable; R - realistic; and T - time-based.

IX.CREATE ACTION PLANS

Action plans should include a detailed plan and time frame for each of the objectives that have been established. The action plan should give specific directions to all the participants.

Always keep in mind that the focus of the improvement plan is better student performance and achievement in all areas. While improved facilities, better athletic fields and other improvements have a tangential effect upon student progress, the school improvement plan should concentrate on those improvements that occur in the classroom and in the relationships that are fostered

there. Here are a few examples of goals that have been set by other schools, both public and private, that address student needs:

Academic goals – measurable progress in reading, writing, mathematics, foreign language, etc. The emphasis is on measurable.

Social goals – efforts to increase students' awareness of the feelings and attitudes of others through programs designed to emphasize mutual understanding.

Organizational goals – efforts to increase attendance, reduce tardiness, etc

Disciplinary goals – programs to reduce incidences of misbehavior and acting out.

Goals to increase teacher effectiveness (an administrative goal that has a direct impact upon students)

Progress toward these goals is capable of being measured and is therefore appropriate for inclusion in any school improvement plan.

TYPICAL ACTION PLAN MATRIX			
I. First Overall Organizational Goal to Provide for Student Achievement			
<u>STRATEGIES</u>	<u>INDICATORS</u>	<u>TIME LINE</u>	<u>PERSONS RESPONSIBLE</u>
<u>A. First objective to accomplish Goal I</u>	<u>Insert the methods that will be used to accomplish, evaluate or assess the objective described.</u>	<u>Insert how long it will take to achieve the objective</u>	<u>Insert the team or persons responsible to achieve the objective</u>
<u>B Second Objective</u>	<u>As Above</u>	<u>As Above</u>	<u>As Above</u>
<u>CONTINUE FOR ALL OBJECTIVES FOR GOAL I</u>			
<u>II. Insert Goal II</u>			
<u>List Objectives for Goal II</u>	<u>Use the same or similar techniques for all of the subsequent objectives.</u>		

THE FOLLOW-UP

X. IMPLEMENT THE PLANS

XI. MONITOR, EVALUATE & UPDATE THE COMPONENTS OF THE PLAN

Set a schedule for reviewing the plan and discuss with stakeholders regularly to assess progress.

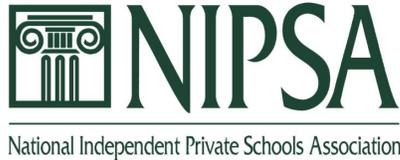
XII. CREATE THE ANNUAL REPORT

Report progress as part of your annual report to NIPSA.

Other Resources

A Handbook for Principals, Teacher and School Councils – A good handbook printed by the Education Improvement Commission - available online at www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/reports/sihande.pdf

If you Google “school improvement plans” you will find a wealth of information, sample plans and what others have done online.



PART IV

EVALUATIVE CRITERIA FOR SCHOOL THERAPEUTIC CERTIFICATION

A SELF-STUDY GUIDE

Each of the following criteria must be addressed in your report. Please follow the numbering used to report your comments and observations. Programs that have an educational component must also complete Sections 4 through 9 of the criteria for academic accreditation as outlined in the Handbook for Academic Accreditation. Please Note: Some of the following Sections may have been completed during an academic site visit. If so, the site chair and the head of school (or designate) may review the former report and, if appropriate, the former report of the agreed upon sections may be used in this report.

1.0 General Data

This section should include all of the current statistical information for the program.

1.1 Pertinent Information

Program _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone: _____ Fax _____

Name and Title of Head of School _____

School Structure

1.1.1 Describe the program _____

1.1.2 Enrollment (as of October 1st of the current program year) _____

1.1.3 Enrollment Three Years Ago _____

1.2 Promotional Information, Admissions and Records

- 1.2.1 List methods used to give the community and parents of prospective clients information about the program. Append brochures or catalogues. Include other materials in a supplementary file.
1.2.2 List the distinguishing characteristics that attract clients to your program. Briefly describe admissions procedures. Please include entrance requirements, tests used, and other screening procedures.
1.2.3 All NIPSA programs are required to have an anti-discrimination policy. Briefly describe how your policy is made public and how is it published. Include copies in your appendix.
1.2.4 If needed, list short and long term plans to implement changes in promotional and admissions programs.
1.2.5 Compare present enrollment with capacity.
1.2.6 If the program is planning to grow what is the potential for enrolling new clients?
1.2.7 Describe how progress is reported. (Include a copy of reporting instruments in appendix.)
1.2.8 Describe the system used to request records from a former program and to transfer client records from your program to the client's next program.
1.2.9 How are client and personnel records protected against fire, theft, vandalism, etc.? (It is required that adequate protection of records be evident.)
1.2.10 Are all required governmental permits and inspection reports current? Include a copy of them in the appendix and supplementary file.

1.3 Geographical Community

- 1.3.1 What community or city does your program serve?
- 1.3.2 (For Private schools) Include a map (county or city road map acceptable) in the supplementary materials file showing location and area served (if applicable.)
- 1.3.3 What demographic changes are occurring in the community your program serves? How do you believe these changes will affect the program?

2.0 Philosophy and Goals

- 2.1 Describe the philosophy and goals of the treatment program.
- 2.2 How are the philosophy and goals of the program communicated to the program community? *Include examples in the appendix.*
- 2.3 Describe the population served and the disorders or personality traits addressed by the program (Use DSM V categories and an indication of mild, moderate or severe).
- 2.4 Below are the different levels of clinical certification available. Please indicate which level you are interested in applying for. Note: There needs to be a direct relationship between the DSM V diagnosis and severity of the clients and the level selected.

Level I - Emotional Support and Development Programs:

Counseling and guidance are provided as part of the program on an as needed basis and may be provided on-site or by outside referrals. A psychiatric consultant or staff member is available for medication or consultation if required. Most students do not have a DSM V diagnosis, and those who do, are "mild." Any previous in-patient psychiatric hospitalizations have resulted in the discharge recommendation that no further intensive care is necessary. A consulting psychiatrist should be available if needed. Clinical certification is optional.

Level II – Therapy Available Programs:

Clinicians are licensed or must be license eligible and are provided for students identified as in need of counseling or therapy. Sessions are conducted at least weekly on site and may be group or individual. If there have been previous in-patient psychiatric hospitalizations, the discharge summary recommendation has been for a lower non-hospital level of care. A psychiatric consultant or staff member is available for medication or consultation if required. The student's DSM V diagnosis may be "mild" or "moderate." Since therapy is being offered, clinical certification is required.

Level III – Therapy Required Programs:

Therapy is part of the ongoing program and is a requirement for ALL of the students in the school or program. All clinical staff is licensed mental health professionals with a minimum of two years experience. Sessions are conducted and based on the DSM V diagnosis and the need of the client, and may be group and/or individual, and are conducted on site. There may have been previous in-patient psychiatric hospitalizations. All clinical staff is licensed mental health professionals with a minimum of two years experience. Students on medication or those who have had previous hospitalizations meet with the staff psychiatrist or consulting psychiatrist a minimum of bi-monthly. Family therapy is part of the program for all students and is conducted either in person or via Skype or similar electronic means. Clinical certification is required.

Level IV – Intensive Therapy Required Programs:

Most of the students have had at least one prior in-patient psychiatric hospitalization. Regular ongoing intensive treatment is provided at least daily and as needed. A staff psychiatrist provides evaluation, psychiatric care, and medication management, at least monthly. All clinicians are licensed mental health professionals with experience and training of a level necessary to work with this more at risk population. The DSM V modifier for most of the students will be "serious" or "acute." Clinical certification is required.

NOTE: It is assumed that documentation is consistent with the best practice requirements of the profession in which the clinician is licensed and the state in which the program is located. It is expected that the clinicians experience and education is appropriate for the level for which the program is applying, and the diagnosis of the clients with whom the clinician is providing treatment.

- 2.5 Describe the process that is used to determine admission to the therapeutic program and how it is determined if a client is clinically appropriate for the inclusion in the program. Example: What records are required upon admission and how

recent are they required to be, what is the nature of the interview, and what are the qualifications of those who do the intake?

2.6 Are there a clinical or therapeutic staff procedures manual and/or an employee manual? *Please include a copy or copies in the appendix to this report.*

3.0 **School and Leadership**

3.1 *Append An School Chart*

Show lines of authority and communication.

3.2 Describe how program policies are determined, implemented and revised.

3.3 Does the program have written policies covering the following areas?

Note the degree of implementation by marking 1 (not implemented) to 5 (fully implemented), and document or comment depending on the existence of policy. ***Include policies and procedures manual in appendix or supplementary file.***

Implementations:

		1	2	3	4	5
3.3.1	Policy Making					
3.3.2	Handling controversial issues and complaints through the proper channels					
3.3.3	Personnel practices, including job description					
3.3.4	Selection of clinical materials					
3.3.5	Selection of resource materials					
3.3.6	Use of program equipment and facilities					
3.3.7	Curriculum development if appropriate					
3.3.8	Student discipline					
3.3.9	Student restraint					
3.3.10	Staff Development					
3.3.11	Staff Evaluation					
3.3.12	Purchasing of materials and supplies					
3.3.13	Hiring and firing of clinical personnel					

3.4 Describe the working relationship between the program director and administrative staff.

3.5 Describe the working relationship between administrative staff, faculty and support staff.

3.6 Describe how the program administration works to create a climate of cooperation and mutual respect between members of the instructional and support staffs.

3.7 List each member of the administrative staff by name and title and briefly describe the responsibilities of each.

3.8 Is the administrative staff sufficient to meet the needs of the program in implementing the program philosophy and goals? Explain.

3.9 Describe how the administrative staff performs the following functions and evaluate their effectiveness:

3.9.1 Develops and administers program policy

3.9.12 Provides, supervises and participates in staff development program;

3.9.13 Evaluates therapy and job performance;

3.9.14 Communicates and counsels with staff, students and parent community;

3.9.15 Builds climate for good staff and student morale;

3.9.16 Directs the development of the therapeutic program;

3.9.17 Evaluates the clinical program;

3.9.18 Provides orientation for new staff;

3.9.19 Supervises plant use and maintenance; and

3.9.20 Manages program business.

3.9.21 Please describe any additional duties that you may feel important.

We assume that program uses an employee observation or evaluation instrument, please append, or explain if not.

.3.11 Explain how the administrative staff encourages innovations and reasonable experimentation in the clinical program?

3.12 To what extent does the administrative staff provide opportunity for staff members to participate in decisions making?

3.13 Describe methods of communicating news and information to staff, students and parent community. ***Include in the supplementary materials file or appendix up to three copies of each: staff bulletins, student notices, parents notices/newsletters, staff meeting agenda, parent meeting agenda, and/or program newsletter.***

4. **Procedures and Quality Management**

- 4.1 Describe in detail the specific scheduling of clients for therapy.
 - 4.11 How many times a week do they receive therapy?
 - 4.12 What are the lengths of various therapy sessions?
 - 4.13 Does the program use group therapy, individual therapy, or both?
 - 4.14 What types of groups are used (process groups, psycho-educational groups, DBT groups or other configurations)?
 - 4.15 How many clients are in each group?
 - 4.16 How many staff?
 - 4.17 How many times per week for each?
- 4.2 Is a family therapy component part of the program? Is it optional or mandatory? If so, please describe in detail. If no family therapy, please explain.
- 4.3 What type of documentation and records are created after each group, individual or family session?
- 4.4 Is there an emergency 24-hour hotline for clients and/or parents? If so, describe how it operates and the qualifications of those manning the hotline.
- 4.5 Is there a system designed to facilitate internal tracking of unusual events in order to monitor and analyze incidents, identify trends, and develop improvement plans to prevent recurrences. Please describe in detail.
- 4.6 Describe the guidelines for ethical conduct of both staff and clients.
- 4.7 If restraints are employed describe who conducts the restraining, how the staff members are trained, records kept of staff trainings, and to whom incidents requiring restraints are reported?
- 4.8 What situations require restraints or seclusion, and is the policy clear? *Please provide a copy of the restraint and seclusion policy in the supplemental file.*
- 4.9 Documentation: Are all incidents of seclusion and/or restraint documented on designated forms? Is at least the following included? the reason for the physical interventions, the length of the interventions, the persons notified, the antecedent behaviors, alternative interventions attempted and outcomes thereof, the client's condition as observed during the 15 minutes checks, and the client's response to the intervention. Include the form in the appendix.
- 4.10 Are reporting procedures for solitary confinement, or group punishment detailed and *made a part of the supplemental file*?
- 4.11 If an after-care support system is available, please report in detail?
- 4.12 Transition plans should be detailed and made a part of the supplemental file.

5. Personnel

- 5.1 Describe the lines of communication among administration and staff members in the program. Include a table of school.
- 5.2 Describe staff selection procedures and the criteria for selection. What background checks are employed?
- 5.3 What certifications are required for those conducting therapy? (Must be appropriate for the level selected in 2.4 above)
- 5.4 What are the educational or experience requirements for the non-clinical but therapeutic staff? Please complete the staff questionnaire in the appendix and indicate the level of educational attainment, licensure, and qualifications of all staff member (i.e., BS, MA, MSW, PsyD, Ed.D, or PhD degrees.)
- 5.5 Do you employ non-degreed persons as part of the therapeutic staff? If so, what qualification do they have for being considered therapeutic staff? What is the minimum amount of experience required?
- 5.6 Describe any probationary period that is employed for therapeutic staff members?
- 5.7 Describe any mentoring or peer support program that is required.
- 5.8 Describe the program's in-service training.
 - 5.8.1 How are in-service trainings conducted for certificated clinicians and therapeutic staff?
 - 5.8.2 Describe in-service training conducted by the administration for non-certificated staff. Is it on or off site?
 - 5.8.3 How does the school record staff trainings?
 - 5.8.4 Are in-service credits offered for these courses?
- 5.9 What kinds of provisions are made for staff development? How is the staff informed of the latest information?
- 5.10 Is there a psychiatrist on staff or is there a consulting psychiatrist?
 - 5.10.1 If so, how many days and hours a week is this person available?
 - 5.10.2 How often is each program participant seen?
 - 5.10.3 Does he or she write prescriptions?
- 5.11 Describe the process employed to evaluate and supervise clinicians and other therapeutic staff. Give the qualifications of those conducting the evaluation program and of those who are supervisors.
- 5.12 Describe the communication between the therapeutic and the support staff. What is the frequency of meeting for both staff and treatment teams?
- 5.13 If contracted therapist are used, what are the procedures governing their use.

6. Other Certifications

- 6.1 Is the clinical program approved by any mental health or other public body? Include copies of all certifications and approvals in the appendix.
- 6.2 Are all federal, state and local requirements met? Show evidence of compliance in the appendix.

7. Medical Policies

- 7.1 Is there a medication management policy? Please describe in detail.
- 7.2 Is medication compliance addressed? How often and by whom?
- 7.3 Describe the procedures employed if a client should need to be hospitalized during the course of the program year.
- 7.4 Is the policy for the hospitalization of clients included in the clinical policies and procedures manual?
- 7.5 Is medical assistance readily available on a 24-hour basis? Describe in detail.

8. Health and Safety

The well being of children is one of the most important elements of sound educational management. Every school must provide a safe and healthy environment for teaching and learning, and the school must provide evidence that it meets all of the requirements for health and safety in their local community as well as all local, state and federal laws and regulations that are applicable. Policies and/or procedural guidelines to ensure the health and safety of students, the staff, and visitors to the school must be implemented and are being practiced, and the school has plans for responding to emergencies and crises. Because NIPSA certifies clinical programs in not for profit private or public schools that are already academically accredited by our "partners" the overall health and safety of the students and staff is within their purview. Our interest is only in the policy and procedures that are related to the clinical program being certified.

8.1 Policies and Procedures

- 8.1.1 Describe how the administration regularly reviews and updates its written policies and/or procedural guidelines governing the health and safety of clients in the program, and the program staff and visitors.
- 8.1.2 How does the administration regularly review and update its plans for responding to emergencies and crises? Explain. *Include in the supplementary materials the latest Crisis Management Handbook*
- 8.1.3 Are there written procedures and functional equipment with which to communicate during emergencies, to summon assistance? *Provide records in the Supplementary Materials.*
- 8.1.4 Describe if and how the program conducts drills of its emergency and crisis plans.
- 8.1.5 Describe the measures taken to check backgrounds of all staff personnel and other persons who come into contact with clients.
- 8.1.6 Describe how the school maintains emergency information for each child.
- 8.1.7 Are first aid materials conveniently located?
- 8.1.8 Describe the procedures that have been established to address situations where by a student or students become ill or injured, or out of control.

Include in the Supplementary Materials or attach in this report evidence of all licenses and approvals regarding the health and safety of children that have been required and provided by the jurisdiction in which the school operates.

8.2 Health Care

- 8.2.3 What are the policies and/or procedural guidelines to manage the storage, dispensing and disposal of student medications? Describe.
- 8.2.4 Describe the policies and/or procedural guidelines for maintaining and sharing medical records and health information of clients and members of the staff in compliance with applicable laws.
- 8.2.5 Describe the efforts the clinical program makes to establish working relationships with local health and safety authorities and health service providers.
- 8.2.6 Describe the role of the clinical program and how the school includes in its educational program and activities opportunities for students to develop knowledge, attitudes and practices necessary for personal mental health.

8.3 Student Management And Security

- 8.3.1 How does the school account for the whereabouts students in the clinical program at all times?
- 8.3.2 Describe the system used to control access to the program by visitors and other non-school personnel.
- 8.3.3 Describe the role that the clinical program play in promoting awareness, prevention, and responsiveness to issues related to the social and emotional well being of the students.
- 8.3.4 Describe the arrival and departure policies that are in effect for students and parents if relevant to the client population.
- 8.3.5 Describe any provisions for program clients at school functions that take place away from the school's premises.

9. Evaluation

- 9.1 How is the overall program evaluated? Who are the agencies or persons responsible?
- 9.2 What measures of client satisfaction are employed? How are they evaluated in order to bring about program change?
Please attach summaries of evaluations by clients, parents, staff and others in the program community as an appendix to this report.

10. Office Procedures

- 10.1 How and by what methods are records protected and stored? Are there backup copies off site? Who has access to client files and records?
- 10.2 How, and in what way, are staff members made aware of federal regulations regarding confidentiality of medical records?
- 10.3 How is it determined whether all HIPPA regulations are being followed? Who monitors and trains to insure HIPPA compliance?

11. Plant: Building and Grounds

- 11.1 Describe the suitability of the following facilities in relation to implementing the program. Consider whether the physical plant facilitates or obstructs the program and goals for the goals. Consider lighting, heating, ventilation and acoustic factors, furnishings, and indicate strengths and weaknesses. Consider the safety of the clients and faculty and how the physical plant impacts the mission, and goals of the program.
 - 11.1.2 Staff room, lounge or working area.
 - 11.1.3 Other areas pertaining to the program.
 - 11.1.4 Offices, such as administration, counseling, admissions, and attendance and nurse.
 - 11.1.5 Storage areas (indoor and outdoor).
 - 11.1.6 Restrooms (clients and staff).
 - 11.1.7 Drinking fountains.
 - 11.1.8 Dining areas.
- 11.2 Describe any extraordinary facilities requirements that may be necessary in this school.
- 11.3 What improvements to the facility for the clinical program have been made during the last three years?
- 11.4 Are staff members involved in planning for new structures and remodeling of present facilities? Explain.

12.0 Housing And Dormitory Life (Private Residential Schools Only)

As group living is an integral aspect of a Private nonprofit residential school, the facility, and the aspects of that life must be evaluated as part of the entire experience. The institution must exhibit that care has been taken to plan for and implement policies that provide for the affective development and safety of all.

12.1 STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE

- 12.1.1 A suitable statement of the school's housing principles and practice is available to boarders and staff and is seen to work in practice.
- 12.1.2 All rules and procedures governing group living, leaves; privileges and discipline are published so that all know them. *(Include copies in the appendix.)*
- 12.2 ADMISSIONS POLICIES
 - 12.2.1 Describe the admissions policies for new borders and the criteria used to determine suitability.
 - 12.2.2 Describe the guidance practices for boarders. Are there persons assigned to help in orientation and counseling?
 - 12.2.3 Describe the ways in which a boarder can contact an administrative person not immediately associated with a dormitory, in case of an issue.

12. 3 – HEALTH AND WELLBEING

- 12.3.1 Describe how physical and mental health issues are addressed.
- 12.3.2 Describe the policies in place to care for those who may become sick or injured.
- 12.3.3 Describe access to medical personnel, if necessary.
- 12.3.4 Describe emergency services and hospitalization policies and procedures. Describe the process if and when a critical emergency arises.
- 12.3.5 Describe the policies for administering prescribed or OTC drugs.
- 12.3.6 If applicable, describe how personnel are trained in HIPPA responsibilities.

12. 4 – CONTACT WITH PARENTS AND/OR GUARDIANS (If applicable.)

- 12.4.1 Describe any policies about contacting parents or guardians.
- 12.4.2 Explain how parents are notified about conduct, social progress and general behavior. *(Include copies of reports and policies in the appendix.)*

12.5 –ACCOMMODATIONS

- 12.5.1 Describe room and sleeping accommodations and arrangements.
- 12.5.2 Explain how scheduling of leisure time as well as responsibilities is handled.
- 12.5.3 Describe how personal needs are provided including washing, showering and use of toilets.
- 12.5.4 What accommodations are made for the disabled? Describe.
- 12.5.5 If applicable, describe how various age or gender groups are arranged.
- 12.5.6 Describe how participants are allowed to personalize their living areas. Describe the policies.

12.6 – SAFETY

- 12.6.1 Describe the policies regarding health and safety for group living.
- 12.6.2 The organization ensures that the welfare of participants is safeguarded and promoted. Show how this is implemented *by attaching a written risk assessment policy* and how the administration typically responds to its findings.
- 12.6.3 Describe any use of surveillance equipment (e.g. cameras) or security patrolling of buildings or grounds.

12.7 – FIRE AND CRISIS PRECAUTIONS AND DRILLS

- 12.7.1 Discuss how fire and crisis drills are conducted in accordance with local fire department regulations and a *written record of the drills is kept.*
(Include copies of the Crisis Management Plan in the appendix.)

12.8 – FOOD SERVICE (If applicable)

- 12.8.1 Describe the food service arrangements and policies.
- 12.8.2 Explain how the needs of persons with special dietary considerations are met.
- 12.8.3 Describe the measures used to meet the needs of the physically disabled.
- 12.8.4 Describe the qualifications of the food service staff.
- 12.8.5 Describe how the food service meets local and state requirements.

12.9 – PERSONAL POSSESSIONS

- 12.9.1 Describe the laundry provisions for participants.
- 12.9.3 How is reasonable protection provided for personal possessions, money and other valuables?
- 12.9.4. Describe search policies, if any.

12.10 – ACTIVITIES AND FREE TIME

If the program is such that both free time and educational or work time are organized, please describe the extent to which the program is involved in the following.

- 12.10.1 Describe the range and choice of activities, including sufficient and suitably timed free time each day. Is this supervised and if so, how?
- 12.10.2 Explain the range and choices of safe indoor and outdoor recreational areas.
- 12.10.3 What is the policy regarding participants seeking privacy if they wish?
- 12.10.4 Describe how participants are provided the opportunity to practice their religion?
- 12.10.5 What kinds of social activities are provided or encouraged (if applicable)?
- 12.10.6 What are the policies and provisions for field trips (if applicable)?

12.11 – STAFFING AND SUPERVISION

- 12.11.1 For all staff members or volunteers employed or volunteering in a position working with participants provide the following: a job description reflecting their duties, when and what kind of training have they received, all regular reviews of their boarding practices, and any opportunities for training and continual professional development in boarding that they have received.
- 12.11.2 How is the role of spouses, partners and/or other adult members of staff households within boarding houses made clear?
- 12.11.3 Explain if and how the staff supervises participants outside of work or educational time. Are they sufficient in number, training and experience for the age, number and needs of participants, and the locations and activities involved?
- 12.11.4 Are participants at all times under the responsibility of an identified member of staff who is suitably qualified and experienced? Describe.
- 12.11.5 How does staff know the whereabouts of participants (or know how to find their whereabouts) in their charge at all times?
- 12.11.6 Describe the policy and procedure if someone should go missing.
- 12.11.7 Describe any awake night monitoring.
- 12.11.8 Explain how participants have the means of contacting a member of staff at night.
- 12.11.9 Describe how background checks on all staff meet state and local requirements.

12.12 – EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

12.13 – COMPLAINTS

- 12.13.1 How are participants encouraged to make legitimate concerns known to program personnel not associated with the housing?
- 12.13.2 Describe the school's policy for recording and responding to complaints.
- 12.13.3 Describe the written record of complaints that identifies those complaints, and include action taken as a result of those complaints?

12.14 – PARTICIPANT LEADERSHIP

- 12.14.1 If applicable describe any system that gives specific duties and responsibilities that are appropriate for participants, with adequate staff supervision, training and measures to counter possible abuses of the role.

12.15 – LODGINGS (AWAY FROM SCHOOL)

- 12.15.1 Describe the policy and the precautions taken for use by staff and participants during any extended trips away from the home site, and how the well being of participants is protected.

12.16 – LODGINGS IN PRIVATE HOMES AND OTHER NON-PROGRAM OWNED OR CONTROLLED FACILITIES

- 12.16.1 Describe in detail any lodging arrangements that are not directly under the control of the organization (i.e. lodging in private homes, staff homes, etc.
- 12.16.2 How have Items 12.1 through 12.15 (above) been implemented in any arrangement made in this manner so as to fully provide for the well being and safety of participants.

13.0 Improvement Plan

As part of the self-study the program will prepare an improvement or strategic plan that focuses on client achievement and learning and other client-based outcomes (such as attendance, behavior, health and program climate.) The improvement committee should represent the school's immediate community and may employ a model that is appropriate for its mission. The plan should analyze data such as successful and unsuccessful discharges from the program. In addition, any other data from this self-study and other sources to determine the present state of the program and to develop objectives and action plans to improve client outcomes. As this plan is an ongoing document it is expected that previous plans will have been reported upon and have been updated to reflect successes and opportunities for continued growth. Keep in mind that any program can improve; the plan only provides the school with a blueprint for improvement and continued success.

A COPY OF THE IMPROVEMENT PLAN OR STRATEGIC PLAN MUST BE INCLUDED WITH THIS REPORT. KEEP IN MIND THAT THIS REPORT MUST FOCUS ON IMPROVED CLIENT OUTCOMES.

- 13.1 How have various members of the community participated in and contributed to the development of the Improvement Plan?
- 13.2 How have the program's strengths and weaknesses been analyzed?
- 13.3 How have challenges and opportunities presented from the internal and external environments been evaluated as a prelude to planning? (The internal; community is the immediate community of the program - its parents, patrons, clients, staff and administration; the external forces are those which are occurring outside the internal community – in the school, city, state, nation and the world.)
- 13.4 How does the school collect adequate data to determine client success and progress?
- 13.5 What comparisons are made to determine client progress?
- 13.6 How has the program set and prioritized goals? How are goal statements made clear to all?
- 13.7 How has staff research and locally collected data been utilized to determine actions to be taken?
- 13.8 What time lines have been set for action plans?
- 13.9 How is progress being monitored?
- 13.10 What effects (positive or negative) have been observed of client performance? How is this determined?
A copy of the improvement plan should be included with the self-study report and in the supplementary file.

14.0 Finance

- 14.1 If the program has a working budget, who prepares and oversees the budget? Explain budgeting procedures and controls.
- 14.2 *If the program is separate from the school, then there must be a financial statement or accountant's letter available for the site committee chairperson.*
- 14.3 Describe your tuition plan and policies, and append tuition and fee schedule.
- 14.4 Please describe any financial contingency plan.
- 14.5 What kinds of insurance does the program carry? Include copies coverage declarations and/or endorsements in appendix.

- 14.5.1 Does the school accept insurance reimbursement for treatment?
- 14.5.2 Is there client accident insurance?
- 14.5.3 Workman's compensation insurance?
- 14.5.4 Professional liability, liability, and insurance for all buildings and facilities used by clients and staff?

14.6 Salaries:

- 14.6.1 Do you use employee contracts for the clinical staff? *If so, include a copy of the form in the appendix.*
- 14.6.2 How do you establish salaries and determine pay increases? Please indicate below:

- Published salary scale. (Please append.)
- Individually, depending mostly on performance.
- Other (please explain) _____

PART V

THE SCHOOL VISIT

The purpose of the school accreditation visit is to evaluate the school in the light of what the school described in the self-study document; in short, to determine if the "school is doing what it says it is doing."

Research has shown that the best indicators of a school's success in doing what they claim are to be found by visiting with the stakeholders - the parents, teachers and students. In addition, the committee will involve itself in evaluating the entire operation of the school and will investigate all necessary Criteria Areas described in the self-study manual.

IMPORTANT: The committee should be provided with an appropriate, private room in which to conduct its business. The room should contain the following:

- All supplementary materials specified in the Evaluative Criteria, Sections 2 and 3.
- Writing implements and legal pads.
- A computer and printer
- Table and chairs to accommodate the committee.
- Access to the www.

The following schedule is meant as a guideline and not a prescription. Depending on numerous factors the actual visit may take two full days or more. These factors are: the number of sites, the student population, and the number of members on the committee. However, every attempt will be made to limit the visit to approximately a day and a half. The actual schedule and duration of the visit will be determined by the site chair and school head.

TYPICAL VISITING COMMITTEE SCHEDULE

<u>FIRST DAY</u>	<u>Activity</u>	<u>Location</u>
2:00 PM	Visiting committee tours facility	School
3:00 – 5:30	Meetings with all key personnel	School
5:30	Committee meets with chair to determine assignments and organize the work for the visit	Conference Room
6:30 – 9:00	Dinner with key personnel (not required)	To be determined by school
<u>SECOND DAY</u>		
7:30 AM	Team arrives at school to observe student drop-off, etc.	School
9:00 AM – 9:30 AM	Committee meets with selected parents	School meeting room
9:30 – 10:00 AM	Committee meets with selected students	School meeting room
10:00 – 10:30 A.M.	Committee meets with selected faculty.	School meeting room

10:30 A.M. – 2:30 P.M.	Committee visits specialty areas and classes, speaks with key personnel, inspects safety measures, and evaluates program.	Classes, library, labs, etc.
2:30 – 3:30 P.M.	Committee observes school closing, after-care, sports, etc.	Various areas
4:00 PM	Committee meets to discuss visit, and write report. Chair clarifies any questions with administration.	Conference room
5:00 P.M.	Visit concludes. Chair meets with school head to discuss findings and recommendation.	

In the case of large schools or multiple sites this schedule will be modified by the site chairperson in consultation with the school head.

NATIONAL INDEPENDENT PRIVATE SCHOOLS ASSOCIATION Auditor Confidentiality Agreement

The National Independent Private Schools Association (NIPSA) has a legal and ethical responsibility to safeguard the privacy of all clients, students and staff and to protect any confidentiality of health and other proprietary information that may be inspected during an accreditation or certification evaluation and site visit. Each auditor has a continuing obligation to protect this information.

I hereby agree that I will abide by the following:

1. I will only access confidential information for which I have a legitimate need to know.
2. I will not in any way disclose, divulge, copy, release, sell, loan, review, alter or destroy any clients', students' or staff health information.
3. I will not otherwise misuse or misappropriate confidential information.
4. I will not share information that has been disclosed to me during my evaluation of this school unless I obtain specific permission for the administration of the school.

Name of School: _____

Location of School: _____

Acknowledgement:

I have read, understand, and agree to the Confidentiality Agreement.

Signature

Date

Printed Name

Witness Signature

Date

Printed Name

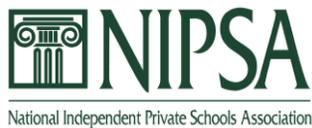
PART VI

SCHOOL SURVEYS

SCHOOLS ARE FREE TO USE ANY SURVEYS OF SCHOOL CLIMATE AND EFFECTIVENESS THAT THEY MAY DESIRE. THREE GROUPS MUST BE SURVEYED: STUDENTS, PARENTS AND FACULTY.

WE HAVE INCLUDED SAMPLE SURVEYS FOR STUDENTS AND PARENTS THAT THE SCHOOL IS FREE TO USE. IF YOU WANT TO USE THESE SURVEYS WE WILL SUPPLY A DISK AND THEY CAN BE DOWNLOADED, OR CONTACT OUR OFFICE AT jaws1139@aol.com AND ASK FOR “SURVEYS”. WE WILL EMAIL YOU A COPY THAT YOU CAN ADAPT TO YOUR USE.

WE HAVE NOT INCLUDED A TEACHER OR STAFF SURVEY AND SUGGEST THAT SCHOOLS DESIGN A FORM THAT WOULD BE APPROPRIATE FOR THEIR UNIQUE NEEDS.



SAMPLE PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE

To the Parent: Please complete this form at you earliest convenience. It is not necessary to sign your name. Return this form to school in the enclosed self-addressed stamped envelope. (Suggestion: Preview the entire questionnaire before beginning.)

Your participation in this school-wide survey is genuinely appreciated. We wish to know your thoughts and ideas so that we can share them with the staff, and ultimately effect changes that will improve our school.

- 1. How long have you lived in your present community? ____ years.
- 2. How were you introduced to this school? Personal recommendation Telephone directory Through summer or camp program Driving by the facility Other (Please specify) _____

- 3. Please circle your child(ren's) present grade(s):
 PK K 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

4. How many of your children, including former enrollees, have attended our school? _____

5. How many years has (have) your child(ren) attended our school, including this year? _____

6. Do you presently have any children enrolled in another school? Yes No If yes. Please

a. Indicate what kind of school: Private Public Parochial

b. Circle the grades in which you child(ren) is (are) enrolled:

PK K 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

7. Approximately how many times have you visited school this year:

a. With an invitation? _____ b. Without an invitation _____

8. For what purpose did you visit?

9. Indicate the sources from which you receive information about the school by rating the following by 1 (most informative) to 5 (least informative.)

___ Teachers ___ Children ___ Other parents ___ School bulletins ___ Newsletters ___ Other (specify) _____

10. Do you get all the information you want about the school? Yes No Usually

If "No", what additional information would you like if it could be obtained for you?

11. What are some of the things you especially like about the school? _____

12. What are some of the things you would like to see changed?

13. How do you rate you child(ren's):

	Excellent	Good	Adequate	Inadequate	Comments
Textbooks					
Workbooks					
Other materials					

14. Your school teaches the following subjects. Please check the statement that best describes your feelings about each of them:

SUBJECT	APPROPRIATENESS			EFFECTIVENESS		
	Very Important to All	Worthwhile, but not for All Children	Not Worthwhile	My Child is Learning		
				A great deal	An average amount	Less than I expect
Reading (including phonics)						
Mathematics						
English (including spelling, writing, literature, etc.)						
Penmanship						
Social Studies						
Foreign Language						
Science						
Health Education						
Growth & Development						
Exercise and Diet						
Drug Awareness						
Physical Education						
Music						
Art						

15. What other courses or subjects would you like added to the curriculum for your child(ren)?

16. What evidence of your child(ren's) progress do you see? (How is it demonstrated? In what form is it?)

Schoolwork brought home Verbal performance Writing Behavior Attitudes Reasoning ability Independent research Initiative Effort Problem solving Other (please specify)

17. Do you have any suggestions that might help us improve the educational program for your children?

18. Do you think the school is asking too much or too little of students, or do you think that present expectations are about right?

Please check one: Too much About right Too little Comments:

19. Homework: Do you think there is: Too much About right Too Little Is homework usually relative to the learning program? Yes No Is it meaningful? Yes No Is it accomplished without parental assistance? Yes No

Comments: _____

20. Please comment on your child's social development and the school's emphasis in that area:

21. What do you think about discipline in the school? Too severe About right Too lax Comments:

22. Rate the following pupil progress vehicles in terms of how valuable or informative they are:

	VERY INFORMATIVE	ADEQUATE	OF LIMITED VALUE	NOT VERY HELPFUL
Progress Report (Report Card)				
Interim Progress report				
Principal's List				
In person pupil evaluation				
Teacher phone calls				
Teacher notes and letters				

23. How do you believe your child(ren) finds (find) the overall atmosphere and environment at our school?

	Always	Usually	Seldom	Comments
Conducive to learning				
Friendly				
Supportive				
Challenging				
Stimulating				

24. Does the school, through its various communication avenues, inform you adequately – or better – about:

	Yes	No		Yes	No
School philosophy and goals			Extracurricular events		
Building and grounds projects			Faculty and Staff		
School Financing			Services, such as transportation, food, extended care, etc.		
Curricular activities					

25. Do you have any questions or comments about the subjects listed in question 24?

26. What do you think the purposes of the school should be?

27. How do you rate the following special events?

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Did not attend
Back-to-school Night					
Open House					
Musical and Holiday Programs					
Classroom Programs					
Field Days					
Other:					

Any comments? _____

28. Do you find the following staff members responsive to your child's and family's needs?

	Yes	No	Comments
Classroom teachers			
Aides			
Coaches and PE instructors			
Principal			
Director			
Counselors			
Food Service personnel			
Nurse			

29. Please express your feelings about office personnel with whom you have had contact:

	Courteous, friendly	Helpful	Indifferent	Too busy
Receptionist				
Telephone operator				
Business officer				
Admissions personnel				
Attendance officer				
Transportation manager				
Other:				

30. How do you rate the physical plant?

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Inadequate	Comments
Buildings					
Playgrounds					
Parking					
Landscaping					
Maintenance					
Cleanliness					

Any suggestions for improvement?

31. How would you change the school newsletter coverage of:

	More	Same	Less	Comments and suggestions
Classroom activities				
School's mission, standards				
Study trips				
Parent's activities				
Students				
Teachers, staff				
Curriculum				
Special events				

32. What are your feelings about our annual fund-raiser?

Physical Education			
Music			
Art			
Foreign Language			
Computers			
Other			

6. Check the activities in which you participate:

- | | | |
|---|--|------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Scouting | <input type="checkbox"/> Drill Team | <input type="checkbox"/> Band |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chorus | <input type="checkbox"/> Sports | <input type="checkbox"/> Dance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gymnastics | <input type="checkbox"/> Arts and Crafts | <input type="checkbox"/> Computers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please specify) _____ | | |

7. Do you like the activities in which you participate? Yes No

8. What additional after school activities would you like to have?

9. Do you think that your teachers ask you to do too much work during school or too little work, or do you think what they ask is just right? Please check the statement that tells how you feel:

- Too much work Too little work The amount is just right Don't know

Why do you feel this way?

10. Please check the statement that tells how you feel about homework:

- Too much homework Too little homework Just about right Don't know

Why do you feel this way?

11. Please check the statement that tells how you feel about discipline here at school:

- Too much discipline Just right Too easy Don't know

Why do you feel this way?

12. What do you like best about your teachers?

13. What are some of the things you would like your teachers to do for you that they are not doing now?

14. How do you feel about the field trips that you go on?

- They are worthwhile They are a waste of time Don't know

Why do you feel this way?

Do you think there should be more field trips? Yes No

If you answered yes, where would you like to go?

15. How do you feel about the length of recess?

- Just right Too short Too long Don't know

16. What do you like best about your school principal?

17. What are some of the thing you would like your principal to do that he/she is not doing now?

18. Please indicate how you come to school:

Parents drive me Carpool Bus Walk Other (Specify) _____

19. Do you have a computer at home? Yes No

If yes, what kind? Apple/Macintosh IBM/IBM Clone Other (Type) _____

20. Check the statements that tell how you feel about your school. You may check as many statements as you like:

21. you with dress <input type="checkbox"/> Yes What you change?	<input type="checkbox"/>	Most lessons are interesting.	Are happy the code? <input type="checkbox"/> No would
	<input type="checkbox"/>	I get enough time to work on my own.	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Most lessons are boring.	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	The teachers work hard with all the students, but they go too fast for me.	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	The teachers work hard with all the students, but they go too slowly for me.	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	I like the special projects we work on in some of our lessons.	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	I like the chance to look up more about the things we are studying.	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	I like the chance to do extra credit projects.	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Most teachers know which students need help and help each one when he or she need it.	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	I like school.	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	I like how friendly the teachers are to the students.	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	I like to see parents helping around the school.	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	I like the spirit and loyalty of the school.	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	I like the way the principal and the teachers know each other and try to help us.	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	I like the school because there is always someone her to talk to.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	I like the way we elect and work with classroom and school officers (student council, government.)		
<input type="checkbox"/>	I like to work in groups in class.		
<input type="checkbox"/>	I like to work alone at school.		

22. Is there enough time to get individual help from a teacher? Yes No

23. If you have a problem on the playground do you get help from your teachers?

Yes No

24. Which best describes teachers at this school?

Caring, supportive Some try to help Most have little interest They don't care

25. What is your favorite subject?

26. What best describes how you feel about students here at school?

Really like, I am happy Mostly like and happy OK Do not like

27. Do you participate on a sport team NOT connected to this school? Yes No
If yes, what kind of sport or team?

28. How many days do you stay after school? 1 2 3 4 5

Until what time do you stay? 4:00 4:30 5:00 5:30 6:00

29. If you stay after school, what best describes how you feel about your after school supervisors?

Most care and try to help Some try to help Most don't care None care at all

If there is anything you would like to add to this survey, please write it here. Your suggestions are valuable.

PART VII

APPEALS PROCESS

The school has the right to refuse the choice of members for the visiting committee that have been assigned to them. However, the school must inform the Accreditation and/or the Executive Director of the disagreement at least two months prior to the scheduled visit. Without discussion or cause, the Accreditation Vice-President will appoint a new member or members.

In the case of a disagreement between the Visiting Committee Report and the school, the school has the right to appeal any recommendations or findings of the committee.

The school should fill out the Notice of Appeal Form and send a copy to the National Office. A copy will be entered in the school's membership folder and a copy will be sent to the Accreditation Vice-President.

The Accreditation Vice-President will then act as the mediator between the school and the chair of the visiting committee. The Accreditation Vice-President will note the appeal and the resolution of the appeal, and will present this information to the Board of Directors during deliberation of the school's accreditation.

If the school is not satisfied with the handling of the appeal, the school may schedule a time during the board meeting to present its case to the full board before any accreditation decision is made.

At this point the board has the right to:

- Delay the decision of accreditation until more evidence is gathered;
- Request of the Accreditation Vice-President a review of the Self-Study;
- Arrange for the visit of a mediating person to make a one-day visit to the school to gather evidence, at the school's expense (said person to be a qualified site chair);
- Reschedule the decision to the next board meeting.

The expectation that all processes will go smoothly for both the school and the visiting committee is the primary hope of the accreditation process. However, when a problem arises, the organization has provided this method of appeal to resolve the situation.

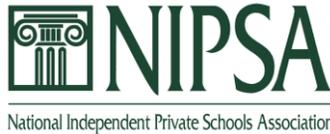
PROCESS FOR DEALING WITH AN INTER-ORGANIZATIONAL COMPLAINT

All complaints should be in writing to the National Office. When received, the office will notify the school and set an appropriate time for the school to settle the problem with the person or persons making the complaint.

Complaints may be made for many reasons. Sometimes a school does not describe a policy clearly, or has not lived up to that which the person feels was promised or inferred.

If the complaint is settled the school must notify the National Office in writing. If the problem persists the President may assign a member of the Executive Committee to act as a mediator. If this fails, the President will activate the Ethics Committee to become involved in the judgment.

The person who issues the complaint and the school will be given a copy of this procedure when a complaint is received. The National Office has the responsibility of tracking the procedure and in keeping all parties informed of progress or lack thereof.



REQUEST FOR APPEAL
NIPSA Schools

Please print or type:

Current Accreditation Status Date

Name of School

Street Address

City State Zip Code

Chief Administrative Officer Phone

School Representative, if other than above

List Violations of Standards Cited (if any):
Basis for Appeal (Continue on back if necessary):
Comments:

Signature	Date

OFFICE USE ONLY	
Date Appeal Received: _____	
Processed By: _____	Date: _____
_____	Date: _____

Parent, Student and Patron Complaints

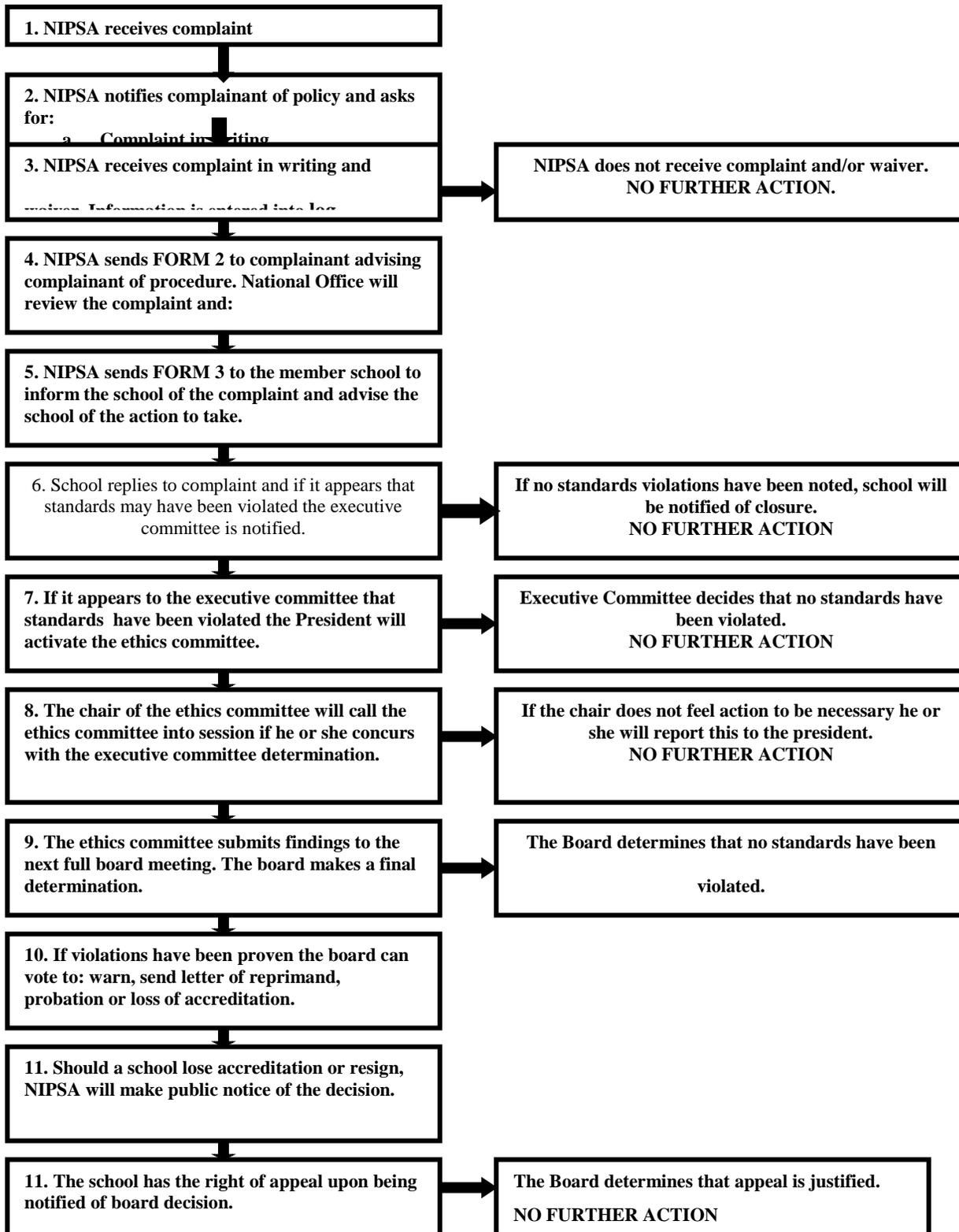
COMPLAINT PROCESS

1. NIPSA does not investigate complaints from parents, employees, or non-member schools as a public service. In the event that any person desires to file a complaint against a member school, NIPSA will advise the complaining party that the complaining party must execute and return an original waiver and release in favor of NIPSA. (Form 1). Any complaints submitted without the required waiver will not be acknowledged.
2. All complaints shall be in writing and received at the National Office. All properly submitted complaints will be logged into a master log, which includes (to the extent provided): (a) name of member school about which the complaint has been received; (b) name of complaining party; (c) date of complaint; (d) date of receipt of complaint; (e) whether the complaint has been investigated; and (f) final resolution of complaint.
3. Upon receipt of the initial complaint, the National Office will (a) acknowledge receipt of the complaint, (b) advise the complaining party that the information received will not be maintained as confidential, (c) advise that NIPSA is transmitting a copy to the member school that is the subject of the complaint; (d) request direct resolution between the parties; and (e) advise that pursuant to NIPSA's processes, NIPSA does not investigate complaints from parents, employees, or non-member schools as a public service. Therefore, although the complaint may be investigated, NIPSA may not disclose to the complaining party the fact of, status of, or resolution of any investigation. (Form 2).
4. The National Office will review the complaint to determine whether it meets the threshold requirements for investigatory action by NIPSA. Only those complaints that reflect information or contain allegations which, if true, would lead to a loss of accreditation (or a failure of a candidate school to receive accreditation), will be investigated. Matters that will not be investigated include, but are not limited to: matters that are already the subject of ongoing or threatened litigation; matters that are within the jurisdiction of governmental agencies charged with investigating such issues; matters that involve labor or employment disputes; matters that involve the school's failure to admit, discipline, or expel students; and matters that involve an employee's or parent's disagreement with school policy or the school's application or interpretation of its policies.
5. The National Office will then transmit Form 3 to the member school that is the subject of the complaint, which (a) advises of the receipt of a complaint; (b) encloses a copy of the complaint; (c) encloses a copy of Form 2; (d) encloses a copy of NIPSA's Complaint Procedure; (e) requests direct resolution between the parties; (f) requires a response in writing within 30 days as to whether the matter has been resolved; and (g) requires a response in writing within 30 days as to any allegations meeting the

threshold requirements for investigation by NIPSA.

6. Upon written request, NIPSA may provide member schools with an extension of time to respond to the complaint and Form 3.
7. Once the member school's response has been received, the National Office will review it to determine whether NIPSA's accreditation standards have been violated. If the National Office determines that NIPSA's standards have not been violated, the matter will be closed. A letter will be sent to the member school advising of the closure. (Form 4). The log will be updated and all documentation will be placed in the member school's file.
8. If the National Office determines that NIPSA's standards may have been violated and that such violation could lead to a loss of accreditation, the matter will be referred to the President with a recommendation that the President activate the Ethics Committee for review of the matter. In addition, the failure of a member school to respond as requested by NIPSA to allegations contained in the complaint will result in a request that the President activate the Ethics Committee. A copy of the National Office's request to the President will be sent to the member school (Form 5).
9. The President determines whether to activate the Ethics Committee. If, after review, the President determines that activation of the Ethics Committee is not appropriate because NIPSA's standards have not been violated, the matter will be closed. A letter will be sent to the member school advising of the closure. (Form 4). The log will be updated and all documentation will be placed in the member school's file. The log will be updated and all documentation of the investigation and determination will be maintained in the member school's file.
10. If the President activates the Ethics Committee, the Chair of the Ethics Committee will determine whether NIPSA's standards have been violated and that such violation could lead to a loss of accreditation. If the Chair determines that the standards have not been violated, the Chair will report such determination to the President, National Office, and member school. (Form 4). No further action will be taken. The log will be updated and all documentation of the investigation and determination will be maintained in the member schools file.
11. If the complaint and response reflects what appears to be violations of NIPSA's standards, the Chair of the Ethics Committee will call the Ethics Committee into session to review the allegations and findings. The Ethics Committee may request additional information from appropriate persons. The Ethics Committee will then submit its findings and recommendation to the full board at the next regularly scheduled meeting. The Board makes the final determination regarding action to be regarding the complaint.
12. Possible Board actions include acquittal, warning, written reprimand, probation, or loss of accreditation. Notice of the Board's determination will be sent to the member school. (Form 6). The log will be updated with the final determination and Board action.
13. If the member school elects to appeal the final Board determination, a Request for Appeal must be submitted to the National Office within 15 days of the date of mailing of Form 6. The Request for Appeal form (and any attached documentation) and all other documentation already received in connection with the complaint will be reviewed by the National Office for a final determination. The member school will be notified of the final determination within 45 days of the date that the Request for Appeal is submitted to the National Office. (Form 7).
14. Should a school choose to drop its accreditation or if the Board elects to revoke accreditation, NIPSA will provide public notice of the change in accreditation (after final determination of any appeal).
15. NIPSA will remove complaints from a member school's file after expiration of the NIPSA's three-year records retention period, unless in NIPSA's sole discretion, NIPSA determines that the records should remain in the school's file.
16. Member schools may petition for removal of records from its member school file or from the complaint log. Any such petition should include clear reasons why the records should be removed. The member school must execute a waiver and release in favor of NIPSA (Form 8) before any such request will be granted.

NIPSA COMPLAINT PROCEDURE



PART VIII

APPENDIX I

BYLAWS OF THE

NATIONAL INDEPENDENT PRIVATE SCHOOLS ASSOCIATION

ARTICLE I *Name and Office*

The name of this corporation is the NATIONAL INDEPENDENT PRIVATE SCHOOLS ASSOCIATION, hereafter referred to as NIPSA. NIPSA is incorporated under the laws of the State of California.

The principal registered office of NIPSA is 10134 SW 78th Ct., Miami, FL 33156. The corporation may also have other offices as it may determine or as the affairs of the corporation may from time to time require. The address of the registered office may be changed from time to time as the Board of Directors may determine.

ARTICLE II *Purposes, Rationale, and Imperatives*

Section A: Purpose of NIPSA

The NATIONAL INDEPENDENT PRIVATE SCHOOLS ASSOCIATION is organized exclusively for educational purposes within the scope of 501(c)(6) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 and as amended. Specifically, the purposes of the NATIONAL INDEPENDENT PRIVATE SCHOOLS ASSOCIATION include:

- 1) To encourage the academic accreditation and therapeutic certification processes, as characterized by voluntary peer recognition based on accepted and published standards of excellence, as an organizational witness of the credibility of private tax-paying academic schools;
- 2) To recognize, encourage and improve the quality and diversity of private tax-paying academic schools and/or programs of all categories, including preschool, elementary, secondary, special needs, language, tutorial, and charter, and whether domestic or international, by such actions as the development of educational and research activities, services, and opportunities related to accreditation and/or certification;
- 3) To engage freely in all lawful activities and efforts, including the solicitation of grants and contributions that may reasonably be intended or expected to promote and advance these goals;
- 4) To carry on other business related to the foregoing purposes and to have and exercise all the powers conferred by the laws of the State of California Nonprofit Corporation Act;
- 5) To provide a structure for the improvement of educational programs established to meet the emotional, physical, social and academic needs of children who attend an academic independent private school or independent program.
- 6) To establish educational and therapeutic standards for such programs and provide an accreditation and certification system to implement and maintain those standards;
- 7) To provide a clearinghouse for consulting services, conferences, workshops, and news of mutual interest;
- 8) To establish an educational program to support the goals of the Corporation and to present that program to the public, the media and appropriate governmental bodies;
- 9) To provide a mentoring relationship for other members wanting to open another private school;
- 10) To provide mentoring relationships for schools awaiting accreditation;
- 11) To recognize, encourage, and improve the quality and diversity of schools and programs that serve special populations or offer specialized education and services by such actions as the development of educational and research activities, services, and opportunities related to accreditation and/or certification.

Section B: Rationale

The NATIONAL INDEPENDENT PRIVATE SCHOOLS ASSOCIATION is dedicated to the accreditation and certification processes as a viable and responsible means of establishing a witness of program excellence. NIPSA is based on the concept of voluntary peer recognition; that is, the principle that institutions sharing common purposes and distinctions can effectively assist one another in achieving the standards for academic and therapeutic program excellence and in responding to their respective publics and the nation.

Section C: Accreditation and Certification Imperatives

The NATIONAL INDEPENDENT PRIVATE SCHOOLS ASSOCIATION recognizes that a valid and responsible accreditation or certification process contains the following elements:

- 1) *Criteria.* To be an effective and credible witness of academic and professional quality, the standards must be professionally established and published. These standards are to be readily understood by the clientele and sufficient to determine effectiveness based on sound educational and therapeutic practices.
- 2) *Self-study.* Integral to the accreditation and certification process is the opportunity to engage in a self-study process, whereby effectiveness is assessed based on established standards and guidelines, necessary improvements are made, and results are reported. Accreditation or certification will contain a self-study element and incorporate this element in its review and recognition process.
- 3) *Site Visit.* On-site evaluation is critical to the objective validation of educational or therapeutic effectiveness. Evaluation is to be conducted by persons with no vested interest, who have been trained and are familiar with the accreditation and/or certification criteria and procedures, and knowledgeable of sound educational practices. A site chair may be the owner of an accredited school or certified program, or may be his or her representative. On a site visit no more than two (2) evaluators will serve from one school. The results of the site visit will serve as a key element in the formal review and recognition process.
- 4) *Certificates.* Certificates of accreditation and/or certification will be grade or level and location specific.
- 5) *Re-evaluation.* Reevaluation is essential to insure that accredited or certified members are maintaining the level of quality recognized at their initial accreditation. To do so, the accreditation or certification process will provide for the periodical reevaluation of members. Each change in location, name, owner, program and addition or deletion of grades requires a one-day re-evaluation by one evaluator.
- 6) *Loss of Accreditation.* Loss of accreditation may occur with:
 - a) Failure to pay membership and/or assessment fees;
 - b) Failure to file necessary annual reports;
 - c) Failure to complete and submit interim report;
 - d) *Failure to do re-accreditation or re-certification; or*
 - e) Failure to maintain the criteria as set for membership in NIPSA.

ARTICLE III

Membership and Candidacy

Section A: Qualifications

The NATIONAL INDEPENDENT PRIVATE SCHOOLS ASSOCIATION is comprised of private, tax-paying schools or programs wherever located that are willing to support the purposes, standards, procedures, and other requirements of NIPSA.

Any owner of a tax-paying school or program seeking recognition by NIPSA must make application and provide supportive materials as requested by NIPSA. All prospective schools or programs are required to meet specific criteria and procedural requirements in order to be considered for candidacy and accreditation. The Board of Directors based on the following guidelines will establish these requirements:

- 1) Shall be any individual or entity operating a tax-paying school or program that meets the educational, emotional, social, psychological or physiological needs of children and young adults;
- 2) Has legal authority and appropriate approval to operate;
- 3) Shall operate:
 - 4) a. an academic school consisting of any grades PK through 12 whose educational program is consistent with the criteria set forth for accreditation;
 - 5) b. a school or program that focuses upon the educational, emotional, social, psychological or physiological needs of children and young adults;
- 6) Is willing to comply with all NIPSA academic criteria and/or therapeutic standards, pay all required fees and expenses, attend required meetings, and provide necessary information to the Board of Directors and official representatives to fulfill the recognition process;
- 7) Shall agree to abide by and, if admitted, at all times adhere to the goals, articles, rules and regulations of this Corporation;
- 8) Shall be of good character, dedicated to excellence and the purposes of the Corporation, and meet the qualification and requirements as set forth herein; and
- 9) Shall comply with all laws applicable to the school's operation.

Section B: Process for Membership

A school or program owner desiring to make application to NIPSA must send an official application (signed by the chief administrative officer) and any other requested forms, materials, and exhibits to NIPSA.

The Executive Director will notify the Board that a school or program has applied for candidacy; such notification may be by email, surface mail or electronic means. Board members having objections to the candidacy will notify the Executive Director by the date specified in the notification. A simple majority vote of the Executive Committee will be required for candidacy. The Executive Committee will award the school Candidate status.

Section C: Candidacy Requirements

Candidate Schools must:

- 1) Pay annual dues no later than October 15th or upon acceptance. Candidates granted membership after April 30 must pay one-half of current membership fee;
- 2) Pay annual assessments as fixed from time to time by the Board of Directors based on the number of sites and number of students;
- 3) Submit a yearly report to the Executive Committee together with the submission of yearly dues;
- 4) Obtain accreditation by NIPSA for all of its schools or programs that bear the same name within three years of becoming a candidate;
- 5) Multi-sited candidate schools must submit a schedule for the ultimate accreditation of all its sites that bear the same name.

Section D: Candidate School and Accredited Member Restrictions

Candidate status alone confers no voting rights in this Corporation.

A Candidate School can only publicize its specific status orally until such time as all of its sites have been accredited. An accredited member that owns and operates multiple schools, programs or sites may not publicize itself as a member of NIPSA in regard to any school, program or site that is not accredited or certified by NIPSA. An accredited or certified member that opens a new site may continue to publicize its accreditation as long as the new site is accredited or certified within one year.

A candidate or accredited member may not publicize, state or imply that any school, program or site is accredited by NIPSA unless the school, program or site is in fact accredited by NIPSA.

Section E: Candidacy and Membership Requirements

Candidates and members must:

- 1) Pay annual dues no later than October 15th;
- 2) Pay assessments as fixed from time to time by the Board of Directors based on the number of sites and number of students;
- 3) Submit a yearly report to the Executive Committee prior to the fall Board of Directors meeting;
- 4) Maintain accredited status for all of its schools or programs that bear the same name at all times after obtaining initial accreditation or certification;
- 5) Adhere to the goals, rules and regulations of the Corporation.

Section F: Privileges of Members with Accredited Schools

Only members in good standing who own one or more schools or programs accredited or certified by NIPSA are entitled to vote upon a matter coming before the membership. Each member has one (1) vote at meetings of the Corporation.

Only members in good standing who own one or more schools or programs accredited or certified by NIPSA may serve on the Board of Directors or have a staff member serve on the Board of Directors.

A qualified staff member or other representative may represent a member at all meetings.

Section G: Loss of Candidacy or Membership

Failure to comply with candidacy or membership requirements may result in the loss of candidacy or membership

ARTICLE IV Board of Directors

Section A: Responsibilities and Authority

The Board of Directors is the legal governing body of the NATIONAL INDEPENDENT PRIVATE SCHOOLS ASSOCIATION fulfilling purposes as stated in the Articles of Incorporation and these bylaws and representing the wishes and intent of its membership. The property and affairs of this corporation are directed and supervised by the Board of Directors, that will never consist of fewer than ten (10) nor more than twenty-five (25) members until changed by amendment of the Articles of Incorporation or by a bylaw duly adopted by the members. The Board shall be representative of the geographical areas served by the organization.

The NIPSA Board of Directors is officially entrusted to implement purposes, rationale, and accreditation or certification imperatives of NIPSA as contained in Article II. Further, the Board of Directors is empowered with the legal representation of NIPSA and will be charged with the final responsibility of all business of the corporation. Additional responsibilities of the Board of Directors include, but are not limited to, the following:

- 1) Become the Accrediting and Certification Commission when voting on all accreditations and/or certifications;
- 2) Evaluate the needs of NIPSA and devise programs and activities to meet them in accordance with established procedures and guidelines; review, approve, implement, and evaluate all ongoing NIPSA programs, personnel, services, and activities and their effectiveness;
- 3) Serve as the final authority in all decisions related to acceptance, continuance, and removal from membership in NIPSA;
- 4) Approve financial decisions of NIPSA including the establishment of the fiscal year, approval of the annual budget, review and approval of periodic statements of fiscal operations, and setting of membership fees and other charges;
- 5) Monitor educational policy and legislation in the United States at the national, federal, state and local levels concerning their impact on private school accreditation;
- 6) Provide and maintain appropriate liaison with international, national, state and local government and education officials;
- 7) Establish and approve any other committees not provided for in these Bylaws; establish such duties and powers of these committees in accordance with the provisions of the Articles of Incorporation and these Bylaws; select or change the membership of said committees, or discontinue them (committee chairs must be board members);
- 8) Implement and interpret Bylaws, standards, procedures and policies of NIPSA including any ruling on waivers or exceptions; serve as the final authority on any complaints or appeals filed by NIPSA members;
- 9) Review and amend the Articles of Incorporation or these Bylaws;
- 10) Perform any other duties or responsibilities that may be legally required or that may be appropriate or necessary to the purposes and continued operation of NIPSA.

Section B: Qualifications, Election and Term of Office

A Director must either be an owner of a NIPSA-accredited school or program, or an administrative staff member of the accredited school or certified program, and who has been approved by the owner of the school.

The accredited members entitled to vote at the annual meetings shall elect directors. They shall hold office for a term of three years. However, if any annual meeting is not held or directors are not elected at any annual meeting, they may be elected at any special member's meeting held for the purpose, or they may be elected to fill a vacancy or elected at a special member's meeting held for that purpose and shall hold office until the expiration of the term for which elected and until a successor has been elected and qualified.

Section C: Removal of Directors

Should a member withdraw, be removed from NIPSA membership, or cease operations, or should all schools or programs owned or operated by such member lose their accreditation or certification, then any director who is either such a member or who represents

such a member on the Board of Directors shall automatically and immediately forfeit the position of Director. Should the Board of Directors determine that a director has missed two or more successive board meetings without acceptable explanation and having been excused by the board, such a member will automatically and immediately forfeit the position of director.

Section D: Voting

The act of a majority of directors present at a meeting of the Board of Directors, at which a quorum is present, will be the act of NIPSA, unless the act of a greater number is required by law, the Articles of Incorporation, of these Bylaws.

Section E: Meetings

The Board of Directors is required to meet at least two (2) times per year, one of which must be the annual meeting. The Board of Directors may provide by resolution or bylaw the time and place of its regular meetings.

During the annual meeting, the Board of Directors will conduct any necessary elections, review and approve the annual budget, and conduct any other necessary required business of NIPSA.

All meetings of the Board of Directors are presided over by the President of the Board of Directors. A quorum is required for official business to be transacted.

ARTICLE V

Officers

Section A: Titles and Terms of Office

The following are the Officers of the Board of Directors: President, Vice President for Accreditation – East, Vice President for Accreditation – West, Vice President for Special Needs Schools, Vice President for International Schools, Vice-President for Emerging Programs, Secretary, and Treasurer. The Board of Directors may elect or appoint such other officers, including one or more Vice Presidents of divisions, Assistant Secretaries and Assistant Treasurers. Officers are elected by majority vote of the Board of Directors following its annual meeting or other designated meeting. Only official representatives from current NIPSA accredited schools, programs or corporations may be elected as officers.

Officers serve three-year terms in office and may serve consecutive terms.

Section B: Removal from Office and Vacancies

An officer may be removed from office by a majority vote of the Board of Directors at a regular or special meeting according to the provisions of Article VII.

In the event that an officer's position becomes vacant, the Board of Directors selects a successor at a regular or special meeting. The elected successor will serve the remainder of the term.

Section C: President

The President presides at all Board meetings and brings such items for consideration as appropriate and necessary for the successful operation of NIPSA. The President retains voting privileges on the Board of Directors and also serves as legal signatory of NIPSA and representative of the Board of Directors and NIPSA in all required official capacities. The President presides over the Executive Committee and retains voting privileges in the Executive Committee. The President also serves as a non-voting, ex officio member of all commissions, advisories, or committees.

The President shall, in general, supervise all of the business and affairs of the corporation. The President signs any deeds, mortgages, bonds, contracts, or other instruments that the Board of Directors has authorized to be executed, except in cases where the signing and execution thereof expressly designated by the Board of Directors to some other officer or agent of NIPSA.

Section D: Vice Presidents

The Vice Presidents of the Board of Directors assist the President in the performance of duties and will have such other responsibilities as may be assigned by the President. In the President's absence from a board meeting or any other meeting the Board of Directors shall designate a Vice President to conduct the meeting.

The Vice Presidents and Executive Director oversee the accreditation, certification and membership processes for the Board. The duties include:

- 1) Recommending to the Board the criteria for accreditation or certification of schools and programs in their respective divisions.
- 2) Notifying schools or programs when the accreditation or certification process should begin;
- 3) Accepting letters of intent, candidacy applications, and approving eligibility checklists;
- 4) Assigning site chairs;

- 5) Overseeing all accreditation and/or certification training;
- 6) Conducting criteria reviews;
- 7) Reviewing all site-committee recommendations;
- 8) Chairing the Board when it meets to vote on accreditation and or certification of schools within a Vice President's division;
- 9) Reviewing all candidacy and accreditation and/or certification applications;
- 10) Periodically updating candidacy and membership materials;
- 11) Recommending candidacy approval to Board;
- 12) Communicating with new candidates - writing a letter of acceptance by the board;
- 13) Providing the Board with necessary information to help in the recruitment of new schools and programs.

Section F: Secretary

The Secretary is responsible for the oversight of all functions related to the office and may delegate, as appropriate, any duties of the office to the Executive Director or other qualified personnel.

The Secretary keeps and supervises the keeping of the official minutes and records of all Council meetings and activities of NIPSA. The Secretary supervises all correspondence on behalf of the Board of Directors and notification of meeting. The Secretary will have all appropriate decisions, reports, and resolutions placed into the official minutes. The Secretary also consults with the Executive Director regarding management of records and files and related office procedures.

Section G: Treasurer

The Treasurer is responsible for the overseeing all functions related to the office and may delegate, as appropriate, any duties of the office to the Executive Director or other qualified personnel. The financial records, checkbook, checking account, and other necessary documents shall reside with the treasurer.

The Treasurer assists in the development of the annual budget. He or she oversees the Executive Director in the maintenance of the official copies of the budget and any revisions. The Treasurer supervises and advises the executive Director in matters related to corporate funds in fulfillment of the Board of Directors Directives. The Treasurer will also be advised by the Executive Director concerning the development and maintenance of financial reports, records, and pertinent files pertaining to NIPSA.

The Treasurer provides the Board with a spreadsheet prior to each board meeting.

ARTICLE VI

Executive Committee

Section A: Membership

The President, Vice Presidents, Secretary, and Treasurer of the Board of Directors serve continuously on the Executive Committee by virtue of their elected office and each retains full voting privileges on the Executive Committee.

The Board of Directors may also appoint such other persons as may be appropriate to serve non-voting, ex officio positions on the Executive Committee to any appropriate term of service as may be specified or until removed by the Board of Directors.

Section B: Responsibility and Authority

The Executive Committee is responsible and accountable to the Board of Directors and represents the Council and its wishes in all business within its charge. The Executive Committee is charged:

To make recommendations to the Board of Directors regarding changes to the existing Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws;

To make recommendations to the Board of Directors regarding changes to NIPSA accreditation and/or certification standards, policies, and procedures; to make recommendations regarding operating policies and procedures;

To review and make recommendations regarding annual budget preparation and the establishment of fees and charges;

To make recommendations regarding the employment, continuance, and termination of the Executive Director or appropriate personnel;

To represent the Board of Directors when it is not in session and as may be specifically directed by the Board.

Section C: Limitations

The Executive Committee legally functions on behalf of the Board of Directors when it is not in session except in the following matters:

- 1) Denial of applications for candidacy;
- 2) Terminating membership, candidacy, and/or any other recognition or status designated by NIPSA;

- 3) Changes to the Article of Incorporation or Bylaws; changes or established NIPSA accreditation and/or certification standards, policies, or procedures;
- 4) Disposition or alienation of property or major assets if NIPSA;
- 5) Hiring or termination of the Executive Director;
- 6) Changes in previous decisions of the Board of Directors or specific directives or guidelines established by the Board;
- 7) Changes or limitations to official representatives duly selected to the Board of Directors; and
- 8) Any other matters so specified by the Board of Directors or otherwise stated in the Articles of Incorporation or Bylaws.
- 9) A majority of the members of the Executive Committee constitute a quorum for conducting the business of the Committee and the Association.
- 10) A majority vote of the members present at any meeting of the Executive Committee is required to take action on behalf of the Committee.

Section D: Meetings

The Executive Committee shall meet at least four (4) times a year, twice prior to the regular meetings of the Board of Directors, twice by conference call, and as additionally required for the necessary operations of NIPSA.

ARTICLE VII

Meetings

Section A: Annual Meeting

The annual meeting of the Accredited and Certified Members and Candidate Schools shall be held each year. The Board of Directors shall set the date. All Accredited, Certified and Candidate Schools must be notified.

Section B: Quorum

Procedures related to quorums of meetings are as follows:

- 1) Thirty-three and one-third (33⅓) percent of the total of Accredited and Certified Members in good standing, either attending in person or through a duly authorized and properly issued proxy, shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at a meeting of the Accredited and Certified Members.
- 2) The Accredited Members at a duly called or duly held meeting at which a quorum is present may continue to transact business until adjournment, notwithstanding the withdrawal of enough Accredited and Certified Members to leave less than a quorum, if any action taken (other than adjournment) is approved by at least a majority of the Accredited and Certified Members required to constitute a quorum.
- 3) Unless otherwise stated in these Bylaws, quorum for all regular or special meetings of any official body, committee, or other group established by NIPSA is forty (40) percent of the current membership of said group, except the Board of Directors itself. No official business may be conducted at any meeting at which a quorum is not present except for the adjournment of that meeting.
- 4) A quorum for all regular and special meetings of the Board of Directors will be forty (40) percent of the Directors.
- 5) Unless otherwise stated in these Bylaws, a majority of those members present and eligible to vote at a quorum is required to pass motions and rule on official business.
- 6)
- 7)
- 8) In the event of vacancies in any official body, committee, or other group established by NIPSA, the remaining membership of that body, committee or group, although less than a quorum may by majority vote, elect a successor or successors to fill such vacancy for the un-expired term in accordance with the provisions of these Bylaws.

Section C: Voting

Only Accredited and Certified Members in good standing are entitled to vote upon any matter properly coming before the membership. Each Accredited and Certified Member shall have only one vote, regardless of the number of independent private schools operated directly or indirectly by the Accredited or Certified Member.

Voting may be by voice or by ballot. Any election of Directors must be by ballot if demanded by any Accredited or Certified Member before the voting begins.

A majority vote of the total of Accredited and Certified Members present at any meeting determines outcome.

Section D: Regular Meetings

All official bodies, committees, or other groups established by the NATIONAL INDEPENDENT PRIVATE SCHOOLS ASSOCIATION will conduct such meetings as prescribed by these Bylaws and as necessary to the business of NIPSA. Said body, committee, or other group may provide by resolution the time and place of its meetings.

The Board of Directors is required to hold at least two (2) regular meetings per year, one of which is to be designated as its annual meeting. Immediately following each annual meeting of members, the Board of Directors shall hold a regular meeting for the purpose of organization, election of officers, and the transaction of other business.

Section E: Special Meetings

In addition to regular meetings, the presiding officer of any official body, committee, or other group within NIPSA, or the majority of said group, may call a special meetings. The person authorized to call special meetings of said group shall fix the time and place of the meeting, and will notify all members (including ex-officio members) by telephone, mail, telegraph, or electronic transmission at least ten (10) business days prior to the date of the meeting. No other business may be conducted at the special meeting other than the business specified in the notice.

Notification may be waived with unanimous consent of the members. Quorum and all other procedures regarding meetings will remain in effect.

Members protesting notification of special meetings must do so at the beginning of the meeting; and should improper notification be determined, the meeting will be immediately adjourned with no additional business conducted.

Section 4: Official Business without Formal Meetings

At the discretion of the presiding officer of any official body, committee, or other group established by NIPSA, said group may conduct business (including elections) by mail, telephone, facsimile, or other approved electronic media; with the exception of the annual meeting held by the Board of Directors.

The presiding officer of any group may send or transmit, or cause to be sent or transmitted, notification and any appropriate materials to each member (including ex officio members) at his or her currently registered address with NIPSA and including a reasonable date for response. Minutes of all official actions taken by mail, telephone, teleconference, facsimile, or other approved electronic media will be communicated in writing to each member of said group and entered into the official minutes.

ARTICLE VIII ***NIPSA Employees***

Section A: Executive Director

The Executive Director is to be employed by the Board of Directors, who will specify the duties, salary, and benefits related to the position. The Board of Directors is responsible for retention, compensation, and termination of any Executive Director with necessary input and review by the Executive Committee.

The Executive Director is the chief staff official of NIPSA and is charged with the daily business, representation, and necessary operations of NIPSA. The Executive Director will be a non-voting, ex officio representative on the Board of Directors and all commissions, committees, advisories, or other bodies established by the Board of Directors.

Section B: Other Staff

NIPSA will retain or employ such other staff, as may be necessary and expedient to its needs and operations. All staff members are to be selected by the Executive Director duly operating under any salary guidelines and employment procedures as established by NIPSA.

The Executive Director is also charged with the supervision, compensation, development and retention/termination of any paid NIPSA staff.

ARTICLE IX

Commissions on Standards and Reviews

Section A: Membership

The Board of Directors shall serve as the Commission on Standards and Review.

Commission meetings will be a part of each Board of Directors meeting.

The Vice President for each division shall chair the Commission on matters related to that particular division. All other board members, including the President, become voting members of the Commission.

Section B: Responsibilities

The commission votes on all matters pertaining to the accreditation or certification, re-accreditation or re-certification, or loss of accreditation or certification of candidate or member schools. It approves all written materials for accreditation or certification, site committee handbooks, training manuals and the standards for accreditation or certification. Votes on these matters may be taken by surface mail, email or electronic transmission.

Section C: Meetings

The Commission on Standards and Review will meet at each Board Meeting at least twice a year.

ARTICLE X

Financial Consideration

Section A: Fiscal Year

The fiscal year shall be from July 1 through June 30.

Section B: Income and Assets

The NATIONAL INDEPENDENT PRIVATE SCHOOLS ASSOCIATION may receive such income and/or participate in such income-producing activities as may be legal and permissible for a non-profit corporation exempt from federal income tax under Section 501(c)(6) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 or any other corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue law and as may be necessary and expedient for the fulfillment of its purposes as stated in Article II.

Section C: Operating Expenses

Within any fiscal year, total operating expenses of NIPSA will not exceed the total annual dues, gifts, donations, and earnings received for that year without the direct approval of the Board of Directors.

Section D: Membership Fees and Other Charges

The Board of Directors will approve annually the schedule of dues, assessments, fees, application fees, and other charges, and changes will be published and available upon request. Any changes to approved membership fees and related charges require the direct approval of the Board of Directors.

Section E Disposition of Property and Assets

The Board of Directors, in accordance with the NIPSA Bylaws, acts as legal trustees of any and all real or personal property of the NATIONAL INDEPENDENT PRIVATE SCHOOLS ASSOCIATION and any property accepted, held, sold, transferred, assigned, or otherwise conveyed by the Board will be so accomplished in the corporate name of the corporation. No real property of the corporation may be sold, leased, mortgaged or otherwise conveyed or alienated without said legal action having been approved by the Board of Directors in accordance with these Bylaws.

Section F: Distribution of Earnings and Compensation

No officer, representative, commissioner, committee member, member association or its representative, or any other private individual may receive funds or participate in the financial earnings of the NATIONAL INDEPENDENT PRIVATE SCHOOLS ASSOCIATION, with the exception of just and reasonable compensation for services rendered and/or expense incurred on behalf of NIPSA as approved by the Board of Directors.

By resolution of the Board of Directors, a fixed sum and expenses of attendance, if any, may be allowed to specified individuals for attendance at each regular or special meeting of the Board of Directors. Further, nothing herein contained shall be construed to preclude any official representative sitting on the Board of Directors from servicing the corporation in any other capacity and receiving compensation therefore.

The Board of Directors establishes and approves the salary and benefits of the Executive Director and may establish guidelines and directives regarding the compensation of other NIPSA employees.

Section G: Assets of Individuals within NIPSA

The personal or corporate assets of any officer, representative, commissioner, committee member, employee, or any other private individual acting as an agent or representative on behalf of the NATIONAL INDEPENDENT PRIVATE SCHOOLS ASSOCIATION will not be attached by NIPSA nor shall they be touched in any suit that may be filed against the corporation solely by virtue of association or membership in NIPSA; nor will the assets of member associations, their sponsoring agencies (if any), or their constituents be similarly attached.

APPENDIX II

NIPSA Code of Ethics

1. A school shall clearly state its philosophies, goals and purposes, and all conduct should be consistent with philosophy and goals.
2. Proprietors, administrators, and teachers will fulfill their professional responsibilities with honesty and integrity.
3. School promotional materials and advertisements shall reflect a high regard for accuracy and, accordingly, will regularly be updated.
4. A school's enrollment practices shall be consistent with written policies and procedures and shall not be subject to bargaining and other extraneous considerations. Qualified students shall be admitted without regard to race, color, creed, ethnic background, native origin or any other specific handicaps.
5. A school will make available to parents or guardians of prospective students information concerning financial responsibility to the school, as well as the school's policy regarding refunds.
6. Upon enrollment, student records will be requested from the former schools and then maintained in a professional manner. Upon receipt of a properly signed, written request from another school, records or transcripts which may be helpful in determining qualification for admission will be promptly forwarded. The exception to this would be if all accounts were not paid in full.
7. Confidentiality among schools concerning the school community (students, teachers, parents, etc.) shall be respected.
8. Both parties will respect employment contracts between schools and employees, and no school shall initiate an offer of employment to an employee of another NIPSA member school without that school's approval.
9. A school and its employees will neither solicit the school community nor allow school directories or mailing lists to be used by others for purposes unrelated to the educational program.

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