

South Carolina Independent School Association

P.O. Drawer 690, Orangeburg, SC 29116

Phone (803) 535-4820

Fax (803) 535-4840



School Head
Name of School
School's Mailing Address

Dear School Head,

Plans are being made concerning your school's upcoming accreditation visit. **The one day visit will occur between _____ and _____. PLEASE NOTIFY THE SCISA OFFICE (using the enclosed form) OF YOUR SIX PREFERRED DATES FOR YOUR VISIT DURING THAT TIME FRAME. YOU MUST BE PREPARED FOR THE VISIT ON THE EARLIEST DATE YOU SELECT.** We must work with the schedules of many people and knowing your choice dates as soon as possible will greatly assist in planning your school's visit. The exact date and time, as well as the names of the college/university team members will be coordinated with you in January. In order to allow you the maximum amount of preparation time, please review carefully the enclosed accreditation documents.

To assist you in preparing, please follow these directions:

1. **Make (5) complete packages**, each of which will contain all (items a – f) of the following:
 - a. **Complete and answer SELF STUDY REPORT. The report covers eleven subjects. Do not leave any questions unanswered. At the top of the self-study questions are directions for organizing and completing the report – please follow the directions exactly.**
 - b. **Include the school's Long Range Plan (see item L of the Standards). Be sure it is complete and contains all six of the specific points.**
 - c. **An easy-to-read map including written directions to your school.**
 - d. **Your school's current SCISA Annual Report.**
 - e. **Your school's most current Stanford Achievement Test MASTER LIST SUMMARY page for each grade tested. This page indicates the number of students at or above the 50th national percentile. Provide PSAT scores/documents for students tested in the 10th or 11th grade.**
 - f. **Enclose the accreditation fee of \$850.00. (Any school that requires an accreditation follow-up visit will be subject to a \$75.00 fee as well as any fees associated with third party verification.)**

ALL FIVE PACKETS ARE DUE AT THE SCISA OFFICE BY _____. BE SURE THEY ARE COMPLETE, ACCURATE, AND PROFESSIONAL IN APPEARANCE. YOUR PREPARED PACKAGES WILL BE SENT TO THE EVALUATION TEAM MEMBERS FOR THEIR PRIOR STUDY.

INCLUDE ENVELOPES OR BOXES (WITH PROPER POSTAGE AFFIXED) UNSEALED LARGE ENOUGH TO MAIL THE PACKAGES TO THE TEAM MEMBERS.

Next, prepare one folder of the following items to be placed in the accreditation meeting room on the day of the visit.

The evaluators will review these items on the day of the visit:

- 1. Blank report cards, blank permanent record cards, blank formal applications and contracts, blank testing applications or preliminary application.**
- 2. School brochure or catalog; student handbook, faculty handbook, and the school or Board policy handbook.**
- 3. Complete spring 2012 testing results.**
- 4. Copy of the SCISA Accreditation Standards for an Accredited School revised and adopted May 7, 1998.**
- 5. Have available one copy of the school's curriculum guides and be able to demonstrate how your school is managing the curriculum.**
- 6. A diagram indicating classroom locations, with room numbers, and the teacher assigned to that room.**
- 7. A copy of your EAP (emergency action plan).**

Please study the Accreditation Standards and the checklist that will be used by the team on the day of your visit, paying close attention to the new requirements, **#5 EAP, #7 managing the curriculum, #9 electronic storage/Warning of Inherent Risk form, #10 nationally recognized testing service, and #14 formal or informal Professional Development.**

Plan to serve lunch for the team members at your school. It saves a great deal of time if the evaluators do not have to leave your campus. Please alert your Board President, Chairman, or some other member of your Board to be available during lunch to meet with the team for approximately thirty (30) minutes. Best wishes from the SCISA staff for a successful visit.

Sincerely,

Lyndi Y. Bonnette
Activities Director

Enclosures

South Carolina Independent School Association

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Fax (803) 535-4840

PREFERENCE DATES

SCISA BASIC ACCREDITATION requires a one day visit by two (enrollment under 400) university instructors, or three (enrollment over 400) university instructors, and one SCISA headmaster. To assist us in preparing for your visit, please list in the **order of preference**, six dates that would be good for your school. As much as possible we will try to schedule the visit on one of your choice dates. Of course, before any plans are finalized, we will confirm everything with you.

The dates of your visit should be normal school days. Check the SCISA and the SCISAA calendars to avoid conflicts. Also, do not select dates that could have groups of students or faculty members off campus for field trips, extracurricular activities, etc. Visitors want to see teachers teaching during the visit.

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

PLEASE COMPLETE AND FAX TO SCISA – Attention: Lyndi

School _____ Headmaster _____

Street address _____ City _____ Zip code _____

Total enrollment _____ What grades does your school serve? _____

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

ATTACHED IS A SCISA ACTIVITY CALENDAR. BE SURE YOU DO NOT SELECT DATES FOR YOUR VISIT THAT WOULD FALL ON THE DAYS OF AN ACTIVITY IN WHICH YOU MIGHT WISH TO PARTICIPATE. YOU MUST BE READY FOR YOUR VISIT ON THE EARLIEST DATE SELECTED.

CHOICE OF DATES IN ORDER OF PREFERENCE

YOU MUST INCLUDE ONE CHOICE PER MONTH BETWEEN _____ & _____.

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____ 5. _____ 6. _____

Is there a headmaster you prefer we NOT ask to be on your visit? Name: _____

RETURN TO SCISA VIA FAX (803) 535- 4840 BEFORE _____.

South Carolina Independent School Association

MONTESSORI SELF-STUDY QUESTIONS

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

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

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

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

PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING:

1. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE:

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

2. ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION

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

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

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

4. FINANCIAL RESOURCES

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

5. FACULTY

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

6. STUDENT SERVICES

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

7. PHYSICAL PLANT

- a) Is there a floor plan available? If so, please include.
- b) Is there a regular maintenance plan?

8. PROJECTIONS

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

9. SCHOOL CALENDAR

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

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

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

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Dear Accreditation Team Member,

We appreciate your willingness to serve as an evaluator on the accreditation team listed below. Following are suggestions to help make this a productive visit:

1. Plan to arrive at the school by 8:00 a.m.
2. Conduct an interview with the Head upon arrival.
3. Accreditation team members should divide the areas of responsibility of the visit to best serve the school.
4. Review all curriculum guides.
5. Review the Long Range Plan (6 points)
6. Visit every classroom and observe each teacher in a teaching situation.
7. Tour the entire school plant and facility.
8. Review all student and personnel records.
9. Review the school's previous accreditation report (s) to be sure any previously reported deficiencies have been satisfied. DOES NOT APPLY TO INITIAL VISIT>
10. Plan a conference with the board chairman or his/her representative and all team members.
11. Plan to interview a cross-section of students and faculty members.
12. Use the entire school day to conduct the visit.
13. After the school day the team should meet to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the school prior to the exit conference.
14. Conduct an exit conference with the Head to share the team's findings.
15. Evaluation reports should be assigned and returned to the SCISA office by _____.
16. Evaluate the Library according to the Accreditation Committee Library Standards which are attached.

VISIT TO: _____

ADDRESS: _____

UNIVERSITY TEAM MEMBERS: _____

SCISA HEADMASTER: _____

Copy to: Headmaster of the school to be visited.

South Carolina Independent School Association

SUGGESTED EVALUATIVE CRITERIA

(For Headmaster Representative & Accreditation Visiting Committee)

SCHOOL STAFF AND ADMINISTRATION

- Clear delegation of authority and definition of responsibility for administration and functioning of the school between the board, administration, faculty, and parent's organizations.
- Provision and adequacy for communication/dissemination of information between faculty, staff, students, and parents. Clear channel for faculty, student and parent input of opinions and recommendations.
- Student records: complete, neat, accurate, cumulative, secure from loss, unauthorized disclosure, and alterations.
- Teacher records: transcript and health; all teachers in grades K5 (hired after January 1994) through 12 "must have a minimum of state certificate and/or bachelor's degree." There must be an official college transcript on file for each faculty member. Headmaster does not teach "more than two periods a day or coach two varsity athletic teams, or one of each. An assistant administrator who teaches less than a full load is required in schools over 250 enrollment."
- The school operates "not less than 5 ½ hours a day for a minimum of 175 students school days per session with one-unit courses meeting five days a week for 45 minutes each period or the equivalent."
- Simplicity, adequacy, and accuracy of budget and accounting procedures and records, to include special activities.

SCHOOL PLANT AND FACILITIES

- Overall aesthetic qualities, design, and physical composition which provide for student needs and promote a learning environment and educational program (lighting, acoustics, noise control, physical comfort, health, and safety).
- Adequacy and maintenance of assembly and recreational areas, dining facilities, student and faculty restrooms, office space and equipment.

GUIDANCE SERVICES

- Extent, adequacy, and manner by which student development and interpersonal relationships are monitored, encouraged, and guided with regard to social behavior and personal adjustment, attitudes and values, and discipline. Provision for remedial services.
- Organization and adequacy of guidance serves and staff, and the degree to which they are sufficient, accurate, and current.
- Method and adequacy by which test results and student descriptions are obtained, safe-guarded, utilized, and interpreted for positive result with regard to identification of student, faculty, and curriculum strengths and weaknesses. Provision for follow-up, including post-graduate.
- Procedures and extent by which students are advised and counseled concerning current career choices and needed qualifications.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND HEALTH

- Effective program for screening, recording, monitoring, and follow-up on student and faculty health status, problems, and physical deficiencies. Presence of SCISAA Medical Form (doctor's certificate), SCISSA Parent's Permission Form and signed Warning for Inherent Danger Form for students participating in SCISAA contests.
- Adequacy of program and activities to promote good mental, emotional, and social health practices.
- Adequacy of program, activities, and equipment to provide progressive evaluation of student physical fitness and achievement in accordance with individual aptitudes. Opportunity for specialization in areas of interest or ability.
- Adequacy of procedure, equipment, and staff training for emergency illness or injury.

STUDENT ACTIVITIES

- Extent to which student activities program complements and expands the academic program, and programs by which school discovers and promotes special talents, interest and activities.
- Extent to which students and administration "communicate"; the solicitation, processing, and implementation of requests for change or improvement.
- Adequacy of school-sponsored assembly programs in and out of school.
- Extent to which faculty, parents, and students themselves participate in the management of activities.
- Overall student morale, esprit, and loyalty to school and its administration.

EDUCATIONAL MEDIA, FACILITIES, AND SERVICES

- Adequacy, accessibility, arrangement, and display (space and attractiveness) of resources for student use and development.
- Adequacy and use of instructional materials and aids, professional literature, and equipment for production of educational materials for faculty use.
- Organization for recommending and selecting materials and equipment; financial provisions for continuous development of educational media, facilities, and services.
- Adequacy of records for the storing, inventory, and maintenance of educational materials and equipment.
- Provisions for use of resources available to the community to supplement those of the school.

South Carolina Independent School Association

Montessori Accreditation Information

MONTESSORI ACCREDITATION CHECKLIST

SCHOOL _____ DATE _____

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

1. The school administrator has at least: a bachelor's degree (for basic) or a master's degree (for advanced) **as well as** either a Montessori Administrator credential or Montessori Teacher credential or Montessori experience/professional development. In cases where the administrator works in the classroom, he/she must have additional administrative support. An assistant administrator who teaches less than a full load is required in schools with over 250 enrolled.

ACCEPTABLE _____ UNACCEPTABLE _____

Comments:

2. The school employs teachers in grades K5 – 12 whose academic training, experience or combination of same, fully indicate the professional ability, insight, and enthusiasm necessary to complete classroom assignments satisfactorily. Each teacher in grades K5 – 12 has a minimum of a state certification and/or a bachelor's degree and/or a Montessori certification. A transcript designated by the issuing school as official must be available for each teacher. A student copy or a copy of a copied transcript is not acceptable unless a Montessori credential or state certificate is also on file in a fire-proof cabinet. In addition to a transcript, teacher's, administrator's and staff files must include a School Employee Evaluation for Tuberculosis, an I-9 Form for all employees hired after November 6, 1986, and verification of Blood-borne Pathogens (BBP) Training, and Emergency Action Plan (EAP) training is required for ALL school employees. (Employee is defined as anyone in direct contact with your students.)

ACCEPTABLE _____ UNACCEPTABLE _____

Comments:

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

ACCEPTABLE _____ UNACCEPTABLE _____

Comments:

4. The school has multi-aged classrooms that adequately match state guidelines for teacher/student ratios.

ACCEPTABLE _____ UNACCEPTABLE _____

Comments:

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

ACCEPTABLE _____ UNACCEPTABLE _____

Comments:

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

ACCEPTABLE _____ UNACCEPTABLE _____

Comments:

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

ACCEPTABLE _____ UNACCEPTABLE _____

Comments:

8. The school provides on-campus access to sufficient library books, technological and other resources, to supplement and enrich the total school program emphasizing instruction in research skills. Library and resources may be housed in each classroom consistent with the Montessori prepared environment.

ACCEPTABLE _____ UNACCEPTABLE _____

Comments:

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

ACCEPTABLE _____ UNACCEPTABLE _____

Comments:

10. The school provides adequate guidance service including, but not limited to, annual use of nationally recognized achievement tests to validate local evaluation and to determine proper placement. The Montessori Method uses multiple means of assessments in addition to standardized testing.

ACCEPTABLE _____ UNACCEPTABLE _____

Comments:

11. The school operates no less than five and one-half hours a day for 180 days (gross) per year. This is defined as no less than

175 student school days per academic year with only three half-day exam days each semester being allowed to count toward the total number of days as a full day. Gross days are defined as student days plus faculty in-service days.

ACCEPTABLE _____ UNACCEPTABLE _____

Comments:

12. Physical facilities meet the applicable federal, state, and local safety, fire, and health regulations. Where applicable, laboratory facilities are required to meet the following regulations: eye wash, safety shower, ventilation, gas and water cut-offs located inside the lab, two fire extinguishers, and safe storage for flammable substances. The grounds provide areas for physical education and recreation and the building is maintained to provide a safe, sanitary, and attractive environment for learning.

ACCEPTABLE _____ UNACCEPTABLE _____

Comments:

13. Administrators (or school representatives) must attend at least one SCISA headmasters' meeting (November or March) each year, and are encouraged to attend Montessori conferences and/or professional development.

ACCEPTABLE _____ UNACCEPTABLE _____

Comments:

14. School makes provisions for faculty development to include either informal, on-campus workshops or formal, off-site professional development.

ACCEPTABLE _____ UNACCEPTABLE _____

Comments:

15. The school has s LONG RANGE PLAN (LRP) which includes each of the following:

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

ACCEPTABLE _____ UNACCEPTABLE _____

Comments:

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

ACCEPTABLE _____ UNACCEPTABLE _____

Comments:

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

ACCEPTABLE _____ UNACCEPTABLE _____

Comments:

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

ACCEPTABLE _____ UNACCEPTABLE _____

Comments:

QUALITATIVE STANDARDS FOR ADVANCED ACCREDITATION

19. The school has an SAT standard of either an 1100 average split score of the top 25% of students that take the SAT or ACT equivalent (which may include the previous year's graduates). Has Stanford Achievement or MAP scores of 60% of the national percentile or better on the total battery over four grade levels for the year previous to accreditation.

ACCEPTABLE _____ UNACCEPTABLE _____

Comments:

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CHECKLIST

TEACHER	POSITION	PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT <i>(Show three years)</i>

STUDENT FILE

Name

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

Comments: _____

STUDENT ATHLETE FILE

Name

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

Comments: _____

FACULTY FORM

Name

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

Comments: _____

STAFF FORM

Name

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

Comments: _____

