



ALABAMA INDEPENDENT
SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

Accreditation Standards Manual

(Revised August 2018)

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HISTORY OF AISA ACCREDITATION

The Alabama Independent School Association (AISA) has been steadfast in its effort to maintain an organization of independently operated non-public schools that are rich in diversity, totally committed to academic excellence and deeply concerned about the growth and development of children and youth.

The Association adopted its first set of accreditation standards in 1978. Initially, the standards were structured for the non-public school that had not been accredited by any other recognized educational agency.

In 1980, the original standards were revised and strengthened in an attempt to challenge the individual school, and subsequently, raise the educational image of the Association. After four years, it was a proven fact that the schools that put forth a genuine effort to comply with the 1980 standards had made tremendous progress in their attempt to provide that "clear and positive alternative" for students and their parents.

In 1986, the standards were revised in detail, updated to keep them current and they were procedurally aligned with the format used by other accrediting agencies.

The 1989 revision was written to remain current with changes in education, to continue the challenge for quality programs, and to retain and enhance the AISA image as well as that of each member school. The 1993 revision was structured to make staff development a very important and meaningful part of the self-study process. Beginning with the 1993 revision, examples and ideas for consideration and possible implementation were included, and this format is continued in the 1999 revision.

In January 2003, the AISA gained membership with the National Council for Private School Accreditation (NCPA). NCPA membership gave the AISA national and international recognition through an alliance between NCPA and the Commission on International Trans-Regional Alliance (CITA), which lead to the each school also receiving accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS).

The 2004 revision required member schools to conduct a collegial self-study and formulate a plan for continuous improvement. The revisions were written to remain current with changes in education and procedurally aligned with the format used by other accrediting agencies.

In the summer of 2012, the AISA began working with AdvancED/SACS to develop an Agency Partnership Agreement. In the spring of 2013, this agreement was finalized and the AISA became the Lead Agency in the partnership agreement. This agreement streamlines the AISA/SACS accreditation protocols into one seamless process and is the result of the revisions contained in this current document.

In the summer of 2018, the AISA accreditation committee began working to revise our partnership agreement with AdvancED to gain more operational control over the association accreditation protocols and standards.

ACCREDITATION PROCEDURES

I. INTRODUCTION

"Accrediting" is the process whereby an educational association grants public recognition to a school meeting certain established qualifications and standards, as determined by periodic evaluations. The essential purpose is to provide professional judgment as to the quality of a school and its programs and thereafter encourage continual school improvement.

The Alabama Independent School Association (AISA) acknowledges that an essential characteristic of every member school is its independence. Furthermore, the Association has no desire ever to diminish individual school autonomy. AISA is also aware that there can be a variance in the degree of educational quality from school to school. Therefore, this association of independent schools wants to insure that each member school can achieve and maintain a basic set of standards within an acceptable quality level. Thus, the Association adopted an Accreditation Program for member schools in 1978, which continues today through our partnership with AdvancED Inc.

II. CANDIDACY CRITERIA TO BE MET BY SCHOOL PRIOR TO CONSIDERATION FOR INITIAL AISA ACCREDITATION:

- A. The school must submit an application fee and required documents for membership to the AISA office. Note: membership status is subject to AISA State Board approval.
- B. The school must be a non-profit chartered corporation, for-profit chartered corporation or a church chartered school in operation at the time of application to candidacy.
- C. The school must serve at least 25 students in any combination of grades 1-12.
- D. All personnel at the school must meet AISA accreditation standards and the AISA reserves the right to review background checks on all school personnel prior to acceptance to candidacy.
- E. There must be adequate space, buildings, grounds and facilities to accommodate the curriculum offered.
- F. The school must host a readiness visit to determine the school's ability to meet standards and earn AISA/AdvancED accreditation. Note: The school is responsible for expenses associated with the readiness visit.
- G. The school may remain a candidate for up to two (2) years. The school must complete all of the AISA/AdvancED accreditation requirements for accreditation, submit all required forms and pay all required dues and fees.

III. ACCREDITATION PROCEDURES:

The AISA/AdvancED partnership follows a standard five-year accreditation cycle. However, the AISA/AdvancED partnership does provide the AISA with the flexibility of adjusting cycles as needed.

A. SELF-ASSESSMENT:

Every five years the school prepares its own self-assessment, which has been designed by the AISA Accreditation Committee and incorporates AdvancED Standards and Assurances. The AISA and AdvancED see tremendous value toward continuous school improvement in the self-assessment process. Please review the *AISA/AdvancED Internal Review Process* section of this manual for more information.

B. ON-SITE EVALUATION:

The chair assigned to your Accreditation Review Team (ART) will visit your school or communicate by conference call following the completion of the Self-Assessment, and prior to your Accreditation Review, to determine the school's readiness for their Accreditation Review. The ART will consist of no fewer than three individuals, including the chair. The ART will review the self-assessment, supporting materials, conduct classroom observations and interview stakeholders in order to complete the final Accreditation Report. The report will consist of Commendations, Recommendations and Required Actions and the ART will submit the final document to the AISA Academic Programs Director and the AISA Accreditation Committee for a final determination of status.

D. ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE REVIEW:

The school's self-assessment report and visiting team's findings will be presented to the AISA Accreditation Committee for review and discussion. If the school does not receive full accredited status, the school will be notified and the AISA Accreditation Committee may also request additional data, if deemed necessary, to ensure that their decisions are correct and justifiable.

1. If a school's accreditation status is change from "accredited" to "accredited on probation" or from "accredited on probation" to "not accredited" the school may request an appeal to the AISA Accreditation Committee. No appeals will be considered based on the findings of the ART within the Accreditation Report alone. Only changes in accreditation status will be considered for appeals. If a school disagrees with the finding of the ART, those should be addressed in follow up reports.
2. The school shall be afforded due process. The school's head of school must place in writing any appeal and forward to the AISA Executive Director within 15 days of the AISA decision. Appeals made to the AISA

Accreditation Committee must be accompanied by a \$100.00 check and the school will be financially obligated to all expenses should a visit to the school by the committee be required. If the school is not satisfied with the decision of the AISA Accreditation Committee, the school may make appeal to the AISA State Board and the school's head of school must place in writing any appeal and forward to the AISA Executive Director within 15 days of the AISA Accreditation Committee's decision. Appeals made to the AISA State Board must be accompanied by a \$250 check. The AISA State Board is the final authority on all association matters.

3. Appeals must be made to the AISA Accreditation Committee prior to appealing to the AISA State Board.

E. RE-EVALUATION:

At any point during a school's traditional five year accreditation cycle the AISA office may request a re-evaluation of the school's accreditation status. Reasons for a re-evaluation may be, but not limited to, significant substantive change, egregious violations of accreditation standards, request from the head of school, etc.

IV. STANDARDS HANDBOOK:

This handbook is designed and written to assist schools in meeting accreditation requirements and to promote continuous school improvement. The standards and assurances stated herein are aligned with AdvancED standards. Used in conjunction with a consistent process of continuous school improvement, this handbook will serve as a guidepost for high quality independent school education.

The Board of Directors agrees that if any member has received accreditation within the past five years from AdvancED, the AISA will honor that accreditation standing and term of accreditation. However, to participate in the AISA/AdvancED partnership, the school must be in compliance with AISA requirements prior to its next accreditation review.

VII. FINANCES:

- A. Each school will pay all necessary expenses for the visiting committee members. Expenses will include:

Lead Evaluator - \$500.00 to be paid directly to the Lead Evaluator

Honorarium - \$100.00 per person for a two-day visit (excluding Lead Evaluator)

Mileage - \$.50 per mile for all travel

Lodging – This should be discussed and agreed upon with the appropriate team member(s) prior to the visit, with regard to payment/reimbursement.

NOTE: All fees should be paid at the conclusion of the visit.

- B. A member school is responsible for all required AISA membership dues, fees and programs. Late fees up to \$100.00 may be assessed schools that are late on any monies due for membership dues, fees and programs. Failing to pay any money owed within ninety (90) days will be referred to the AISA State Board of Directors for disposition per State **By-laws** and may affect accredited status.
- C. Required Reports/meetings – The AISA office may charge schools up to \$100.00 for late reports or lack of attendance at required meetings.

VIII. **PROCLAMATIONS:**

Each school will receive notification from AISA once it is approved for accreditation. Each accredited school will receive an official accreditation proclamation from AdvancED once approved by their accreditation council.

IX. **REVISIONS:**

The methodology and procedures of this manual represent a unique approach to encourage academic excellence among AISA/AdvancED accredited schools. Efforts have been made to ensure that the manual is error free and clearly written. The AISA Accreditation Committee has approved this manual and has recognized that revisions are inevitable. Any organized body (Activities Council, Head of School Association, etc.) of the AISA may suggest revisions. These recommendations should be sent to the Executive Director in writing. The Accreditation Committee will review all proposed manual revisions.

AISA/AdvancED Internal Review Process

Step One – School Leadership familiarizes itself with the accreditation process and protocol for Internal and External Review.

Step Two – Review the Accreditation Requirements

- a. Profile
- b. Executive Summary
- c. AISA Assurances
- d. AdvancED Assurances
- e. AISA/AdvancED Standards
- f. Surveys
- g. Student Performance Data
- h. School Improvement/Strategic Plan

Step Three – Based upon an understanding of the accreditation requirements school leadership designs an Internal Review Process to meet requirements and schedule a site visit with the AISA office.

Step Four – Update Profile Information with AdvancED

Step Five – Collect, Analyze and Compile Student Performance Data (The student performance data serves in a threefold capacity. A. Determine the level of academic performance / improvement. B. A source of evidence for meeting the AISA/AdvancED indicators. C. A source for identifying priorities to be addressed in the school improvement plan)

Step Six – Administer all applicable stakeholder surveys

Step Seven – Analyze and compile all survey data to be incorporated in the self-assessment

Step Eight – Perform an Internal Assessment Review of all AISA and AdvancED Assurances

Step Nine – Perform an Internal Assessment Review of all AISA/AdvancED Standards and Indicators

Step Ten – Create/Revise School Improvement Plan

Step Eleven – Write Executive Summary

Step Twelve – Submit Appropriate Reports to the Chair of the ART at least 30 days prior to scheduled visit and prepare to host the ART

Alabama Independent School Association

Standards and Indicators w/Rubric

Leadership Domain

Standard 1.1

The institution commits to a mission statement that defines beliefs about teaching and learning and leads to continuous improvement.

Exceeds Expectations

The institution has a documented and systematic process for the development and/or review of the mission statement that includes collaboration and input from all representative stakeholder groups. The mission statement contains clearly defined and measurable expectations for student learning that include shared beliefs about teaching and learning and is used to guide decisions about teaching and learning.

Meets Expectations

The institution has a documented process for the development and/or review of the mission statement that includes collaboration and input from most representative stakeholder groups. The mission statement contains defined expectations for student learning that include shared beliefs about teaching and learning and is used to guide decisions about teaching and learning.

Emerging

The institution has a process for the development and/or review of the mission statement that includes input from some stakeholder groups. The mission statement contains some defined expectations for student learning and sometimes is used to guide decisions about teaching and learning.

Needs Improvement

The institution does not have a process for the development and/or review of the mission statement and the involvement of stakeholder groups. The mission statement contains limited expectations for student learning and may not guide decisions about teaching and learning.

*Where to find documentation: Mission statement, school handbook, policies and procedures

Standard 1.2

Stakeholders collectively demonstrate actions to ensure the achievement of the institution's mission and desired outcomes for learners.

Exceeds Expectations

The institution has clearly documented evidence of actions involving all stakeholder groups and decisions aligned with the mission in support of the achievement of desired outcomes for learners. There is a documented process to collect and use data to evaluate the achievement of the mission.

Meets Expectations

The institution has some documented evidence of actions involving most stakeholder groups and decisions aligned with the mission in support of the achievement of desired outcomes for learners. There is a process to use data to evaluate the achievement of the mission.

Emerging

The institution has limited evidence of actions involving stakeholder groups and decisions aligned with the mission in support of the achievement of desired outcomes for learners. There is some data used to evaluate the achievement of the mission.

Needs Improvement

The institution has little to no evidence of actions involving stakeholder groups and decisions aligned with the mission in support of the achievement of desired outcomes for learners. There is no evidence of data used to evaluate the achievement of the mission.

*Where to find documentation: Surveys, self-assessment, standardized test results

Standard 1.3

The institution engages in a continuous improvement process that produces evidence, including measurable results of improving student learning and professional practice.

Exceeds Expectations

The institution engages in a focused, intentional, data-driven, and collaborative planning process for continuous improvement and monitors and revises the improvement plan based on evidence and results of implementation. The plan is well-articulated, widely communicated, and contains clearly identified and specific goals, strategies, activities, and measures based on identified needs. The results are systematically evaluated and clearly communicated to all representative stakeholder groups.

Meets Expectations

The institution engages in a data-driven planning process for continuous improvement and monitors and revises the improvement plan based on evidence and results of implementation. The plan contains identified goals, strategies, activities and measures based on identified needs. The results are evaluated and communicated to some representative stakeholder groups.

Emerging

The institution engages in a planning process for continuous improvement that is based on some data and monitors the implementation. The plan contains goals, strategies, activities and measures, and the results are evaluated.

Needs Improvement

The institution has no evidence of planning for continuous improvement. The plan lacks sufficient information regarding goals, strategies, activities and measures, and there is no evidence of evaluation or communication of results.

*Where to find documentation: Strategic plan, surveys, staff meeting minutes

Standard 1.4

The governing authority establishes and ensures adherence to policies that are designed to support the school's mission and institution effectiveness.

Exceeds Expectations

The governing authority has a documented, data-driven process for the ongoing development, review and revision of policies. The governing authority adopts, updates, and holds itself accountable to clearly written policies that comply with applicable laws and regulations and ensure integrity and effective operations.

Meets Expectations

The governing authority has a documented process for the development, review and revision of policies. The governing authority adopts and updates written policies that comply with applicable laws and regulations and ensure integrity and effective operations.

Emerging

The governing authority has a limited and inconsistent process for the development, review and revision of policies. The governing authority has policies that comply with applicable laws and regulations and ensure effective operations.

Needs Improvement

The governing authority does not have a process for the development, review and revision of policies. The governing authority's policies are vague, and it is unclear whether they comply with applicable laws and regulations or whether they ensure effective operations.

*Where to find documentation: Board policies and procedures, board meeting minutes, surveys

Standard 1.5

The governing authority adheres to a code of ethics and functions within defined roles and responsibilities.

Exceeds Expectations

The governing authority adopts and holds itself accountable to a written code of ethics that defines principles of conduct and ethical standards for governance that include policies and practices that provide institutional leadership the autonomy for day-to-day effective operations of the institution. The governing authority adopts, updates, and holds itself accountable to policies that define its roles and responsibilities and regularly engages in ongoing professional learning to enable it to stay current and informed regarding roles and responsibilities, applicable laws, regulations, organizational best practices, and the use of evidence to guide decision-making.

Meets Expectations

The governing authority has a written code of ethics that defines principles of conduct and ethical standards for governance that include policies and practices that provide leadership the autonomy for day-to-day operations of the institution. The governing authority adopts and updates policies that define its roles and responsibilities and engages in professional learning to enable it to stay current and informed regarding roles and responsibilities, applicable laws, regulations, and organizational best practices.

Emerging

The governing authority has a written code of ethics for governance that include policies that provide leadership the autonomy for day-to-day operations of the institution. The governing authority has policies that define its roles and responsibilities and engages in limited professional learning to enable it to stay current regarding roles and responsibilities, applicable laws, and regulations.

Needs Improvement

The governing authority has a vague code of ethics or does not have a code of ethics and does not provide leadership the autonomy for day-to-day operations of the institution. The governing authority does not maintain policies or has vague policies that define its roles and responsibilities and rarely engages in professional learning to enable it to be effective in its roles and responsibilities.

*Where to find documentation: Board policies and procedures, board meeting minutes

Standard 1.6

Leaders implement staff supervision and evaluation processes to improve professional practice and organizational effectiveness.

Exceeds Expectations

The institution has written supervision and evaluation processes for staff members that include specific criteria and models for effective performance and use the results to inform and improve professional practice and student performance. The evaluation process is systematically implemented with fidelity by evaluators who have the knowledge, expertise, and training and includes mechanisms for ongoing feedback and monitoring.

Meets Expectations

The institution has written supervision and evaluation processes for staff members that include specific criteria for performance and use the results to inform and improve professional practice. The evaluation process is implemented by evaluators who have the knowledge, expertise, and training and includes mechanisms for feedback and monitoring.

Emerging

The institution has an evaluation process for staff members that includes general criteria for performance and provides limited results for improving professional practice. The evaluation process is implemented by trained evaluators and includes a mechanism for feedback.

Needs Improvement

The institution does not have a supervision and evaluation process for staff members or has a vague or unclear process for supervising and evaluating staff members. The evaluation process is implemented without consistency and provides little or no feedback.

*Where to find documentation: Teacher observation forms, administrative policies and procedures, staff handbook

Standard 1.7

Leaders implement operational process and procedures to ensure organizational effectiveness in support of teaching and learning.

Exceeds Expectations

The institution establishes, trains staff on, and has evidence of effective implementation of systematic and systemic written processes and procedures. The institution gathers evidence, including the performance of educators and learners, to evaluate the effectiveness and inform the review and revision of processes and procedures.

Meets Expectations

The institution establishes and trains staff to implement written processes and procedures. The institution gathers evidence to evaluate the effectiveness and inform the review and revision of processes and procedures.

Emerging

The institution establishes written processes and procedures. The institution evaluates and makes revisions, when needed, of processes and procedures.

Needs Improvement

The institution establishes vague or few, if any, written processes and procedures. The institution does not evaluate the effectiveness of processes and procedures.

*Where to find documentation: Surveys, professional development opportunities, teacher observations

Standard 1.8

Leaders engage stakeholders to support the achievement of the institution's mission and direction.

Exceeds Expectations

Leaders implement a formal program that provides for meaningful roles and active participation of internal and external stakeholder groups, including staff, students, parents and community members. Leaders consistently and deliberately enact strategies that provide opportunities for two-way communication with internal and external stakeholder groups, including staff, students, parents and community members.

Meets Expectations

Leaders provide opportunities for active participation of internal and external stakeholder groups, including staff, students, parents and community members. Leaders enact strategies that provide opportunities for two-way communication with internal and external stakeholders.

Emerging

Leaders engage staff, students and parent stakeholder groups. Leaders provide opportunities for communication with stakeholders.

Needs Improvement

Leaders rarely or never engage internal and external stakeholder groups. Leaders rarely or never enact strategies that provide opportunities for communication with stakeholders.

*Where to find documentation: School website/social media accounts, communication policies and procedures, PTO meeting minutes

Standard 1.9

The institution provides experiences that cultivate and improve leadership effectiveness.

Exceeds Expectations

The institution enacts a formal program designed to build capacity for effective leadership that includes modeling, coaching and team-building activities. The institution and its leaders nurture a collaborative culture that includes multiple and varied opportunities for shared leadership among stakeholders.

Meets Expectations

The institution supports activities that are designed to improve leadership effectiveness. The institution and its leaders support a culture that includes opportunities for shared leadership among stakeholders.

Emerging

The institution provides support to individuals to engage in activities that are designed to improve leadership effectiveness. The institution and its leaders provide opportunities for shared leadership among stakeholders.

Needs Improvement

The institution has little or no evidence of opportunities designed to build leadership capacity. The institution and its leaders provide limited opportunities for shared leadership among stakeholders.

*Where to find documentation: Professional development opportunities, board meeting minutes, leadership training opportunities

Learning Domain

Standard 2.1

Learners have equitable opportunities to develop skills and achieve the content and learning priorities established by the institution.

Exceeds Expectations

Personalizing learning opportunities for all learners is an integral part of the institution's culture and permeates teaching and learning. Alignment between learning opportunities and the institution's high learning expectations is unmistakably evident.

Meets Expectations

Learning opportunities are personalized to meet most individual learners' needs and interests. The institution strives to align learning opportunities with its high learning expectations, with some work still to be accomplished.

Emerging

Learning opportunities are sometimes personalized to meet some individual learners' needs and interests. Learning opportunities sometimes align to the institution's learning expectations.

Needs Improvement

Personalizing learning opportunities is not a regular part of the institution's teaching and learning culture. There is little to no alignment between learning opportunities and the institution's learning expectations.

*Where to find documentation: Surveys, lesson plans, course offerings

Standard 2.2

The learning culture promotes creativity, innovation and collaborative problem solving.

Exceeds Expectations

Faculty and staff purposefully plan and implement all learning experiences and activities to actively promote a high level of learner engagement, creativity, critical thinking, application of knowledge, innovation, collaborative problem-solving, and self-reflection and include the completion of projects and inquiry-based activities within all courses and subjects. Faculty and staff enthusiastically embrace and consistently demonstrate a set of shared beliefs that focus on learner engagement and the development of creativity, innovation, and problem-solving.

Meets Expectations

Most learning experiences and activities are planned and implemented to promote learner engagement, creativity, critical thinking, application of knowledge, innovation, collaborative problem-solving, and self-reflection and include the completion of projects and inquiry-based activities within all courses and subjects. Faculty and staff exhibit a set of shared beliefs that focus on learner engagement and the development of creativity, innovation, and problem-solving.

Emerging

Some learning experiences demonstrate learner engagement, creativity, critical thinking, application of knowledge, innovation, collaborative problem-solving, and self-reflection through the completion of projects and inquiry-based activities within most courses and subjects. Most faculty and staff exhibit some shared beliefs that focus on learner engagement and the development of creativity, innovation, and problem-solving.

Needs Improvement

Few or no learning experiences demonstrate learner engagement, creativity, critical thinking, application of knowledge, innovation, collaborative problem-solving, and self-reflection or the completion of projects and inquiry-based activities within courses and subjects. Few or no faculty and staff exhibit shared beliefs that focus on learner engagement and the development of creativity and innovation.

*Where to find documentation: Surveys, student work, lesson plans

Standard 2.3

The learning culture develops learners' attitudes, beliefs and skills needed for success.

Exceeds Expectations

Educators consistently provide numerous and equitable experiences that teach learners effective communication skills in all formats (oral, written and digital) and self-direction by expecting them to set goals for their learning and monitor their own progress. The institution clearly and consistently demonstrates the explicit and intentional development of learners' positive attitudes, self-perceptions, and beliefs about learning.

Meets Expectations

Educators frequently provide experiences that teach learners effective communication skills in all formats (oral, written and digital) and self-direction by encouraging them to set goals for their learning and monitor their own progress. The institution demonstrates the explicit development of learners' positive attitudes, self-perceptions and beliefs about learning.

Emerging

Educators sometimes provide experiences that teach learners communication skills in all formats (oral, written and digital) and self-direction by encouraging them to set goals for their learning and monitor their own progress. The institution demonstrates some development of learners' positive attitudes, self-perceptions and beliefs about learning.

Needs Improvement

Educators rarely or never provide experiences to teach learners communication skills or the skills of self-direction. The institution demonstrates little or no explicit development of learners' positive attitudes, self-perceptions and beliefs about learning.

*Where to find documentation: Alumni feedback, graduate tracking data, surveys

Standard 2.4

The institution has a formal structure to ensure learners develop positive relationships with and have adults/peers that support their educational experiences.

Exceeds Expectations

The institution implements and regularly and comprehensively evaluates a formal structure for all learners to have frequent and consistent access to a particular adult, selected by the learner, who ensures the learners are fully supported throughout their educational experiences. The institution consistently ensures each learner has numerous opportunities to develop strong and mutually respectful relationships with the institution's adults and the learner's peers.

Meets Expectations

The institution implements and evaluates a formal structure for learners to have consistent access to an adult who ensures the learners are supported during their educational experiences. The institution ensures learners have opportunities to develop strong and mutually respectful relationships with the institution's adults and the learner's peers.

Emerging

The institution implements a minimal structure for learners to have access to an adult who ensures the learners are supported during their educational experiences. The institution provides learners with some opportunities to develop respectful relationships with the institution's adults and the learner's peers.

Needs Improvement

The institution has no structure for learners to have access to an adult who ensures the learners are supported during their educational experiences. The institution provides learners with limited or no opportunities to develop respectful relationships with the institution's adults and the learner's peers.

*Where to find documentation: Guidance/counseling activities, mentoring programs, academic advising

Standard 2.5

Educators implement a curriculum that is based on high expectations and prepares learners for their next levels.

Exceeds Expectations

The institution has adopted and all educators consistently implement a relevant, rigorous, and aligned curriculum across all grade levels and content areas. Educators expect all learners to participate in a curriculum that is based on high expectations and prepares them to be successful at their next levels.

Meets Expectations

The institution has adopted and most educators consistently implement a relevant, rigorous, and aligned curriculum across most grade levels and content areas. Educators expect most learners to participate in a curriculum that is based on high expectations and prepares them for their next levels.

Emerging

The institution has adopted a relevant, rigorous, and aligned curriculum across some grade levels and content areas, but few educators implement it consistently. Educators expect some learners to participate in a curriculum that has high expectations for learning and may prepare them for their next levels.

Needs Improvement

The institution has adopted a curriculum but can provide little or no evidence of consistent implementation. Educators engage learners in a curriculum that has expectations for learning that appear lower than would be expected and may or may not prepare them for their next levels.

*Where to find documentation: Lesson plans, curriculum guides, syllabi

Standard 2.6

The institution implements a process to ensure the curriculum is clearly aligned to standards and best practices.

Exceeds Expectations

The institution implements a systematic process to ensure the curriculum is clearly aligned to a rigorous set of standards. The curriculum is clearly aligned to research and best practices related to the institution's purpose.

Meets Expectations

The institution implements a process to ensure the curriculum is aligned to a set of standards. The curriculum is aligned to research and best practices related to the institution's purpose.

Emerging

The institution appears to have a process to ensure the curriculum is aligned to a set of standards. The curriculum is somewhat aligned to research or best practices related to the institution's purpose.

Needs Improvement

The institution rarely or never ensures the curriculum is aligned to a set of standards. The curriculum has minimal or no alignment to research or best practices related to the institution's purpose.

*Where to find documentation: Lesson plans, curriculum guides, examples of vertical and horizontal curriculum planning

Standard 2.7

Instruction is monitored and adjusted to meet individual learner's needs and the institution's learning expectations.

Exceeds Expectations

Educators consistently use current and relevant data and a clearly defined process to monitor and adjust instruction to ensure individual learners' needs and the institution's learning expectations are met. Educators consistently implement effective, individualized instructional strategies that address each learner's needs based on deliberate and purposeful planning.

Meets Expectations

Educators frequently use current and relevant data from major content areas and a process to monitor and adjust instruction to ensure individual learners' needs and the institution's learning expectations are met. Educators implement individualized instructional strategies that address each learner's needs based on purposeful planning.

Emerging

Educators sometimes use relevant data and a process to monitor and adjust instruction to ensure individual learners' needs and the institution's learning expectations are met. Educators sometimes implement effective, somewhat individualized instructional strategies that address each learner's needs based on planning.

Needs Improvement

Educators rarely or never use data or a process to monitor and adjust instruction to ensure individual learners' needs and the institution's learning expectations are met. Educators rarely or never engage in deliberate and purposeful planning to determine or implement effective instructional strategies that address each learner's needs.

*Where to find documentation: Student success plans, examples of inside and outside resources available to students, guidance/counseling procedures

Standard 2.8

The institution provides programs and services for learners' educational futures and career planning.

Exceeds Expectations

The institution identifies and implements comprehensive programs and services for all learners to identify strengths and interests that support their career planning and/or educational success at the next level. The institution assists all learners in developing and documenting their personal goals and achievements, based on interests and needs, to support their success at the next level.

Meets Expectations

The institution identifies and implements many programs and services for learners to identify strengths and interests that support their career planning and/or educational success at the next level. The institution assists most learners in developing and documenting their personal goals and achievements to support their success at the next level.

Emerging

The institution identifies and implements some programs or services for learners to identify strengths and interests that support their career planning and/or educational success at the next level. The institution assists some learners in developing and documenting their personal goals and achievements.

Needs Improvement

The institution implements few or no programs or services for learners to identify strengths and interests for career planning and/or educational success at the next level. The institution does not assist learners in developing and documenting their personal goals and achievements.

*Where to find documentation: Guidance/counseling programs, college visits, college exploration activity, relationships with surrounding college/career programs

Standard 2.9

The institution implements, evaluates, and monitors processes to identify and address the specialized social, emotional, developmental, and academic needs of students.

Exceeds Expectations

The institution consistently implements a formalized and documented process for the identification and referral of all students who need additional assistance, services, and resources. The institution consistently utilizes internal and external resources and monitors and evaluates all programs and progress toward addressing the specialized needs of students, and relevant data are regularly used to modify and adjust services.

Meets Expectations

The institution usually implements a formalized process for the identification and referral of all students who need additional assistance, services, and resources. The institution utilizes internal and external resources and monitors and evaluates most programs and progress toward addressing specialized needs of students, and data are used to modify and adjust services.

Emerging

The institution has some processes for the identification and referral of students who need additional assistance, services, and resources. The institution utilizes available resources and sometimes monitors and evaluates progress toward addressing the specialized needs of students.

Needs Improvement

The institution has few or no processes for the identification and referral of students who need additional assistance, services, and resources. The institution utilizes available resources and seldom or never monitors progress toward addressing the specialized needs of students.

*Where to find documentation: Guidance/counseling programs, professional development/training offered, guidelines for addressing identified needs (who/how/when)

Standard 2.10

Learning progress is reliably assessed and consistently and clearly communicated.

Exceeds Expectations

Educators across all grades and subject areas consistently and with fidelity use the institution's established common grading practices and criteria to represent the learner's attainment of content knowledge and skills. These are assessed based on a cohesive set of formative and summative assessments to ensure each learner improves and is prepared for the next level through consistent and clear communication. Formal and informal communication about each learner's progress is consistently and frequently provided to all appropriate stakeholders, including the individual learner, in language that is clear and understandable.

Meets Expectations

Educators consistently use the institution's established common grading practices and criteria to represent the learner's attainment of content knowledge and skills. These are assessed based on a variety of formative and summative assessment data to ensure each learner improves and is prepared for the next level through consistent and clear communication. Formal and informal communication about each learner's progress is frequently provided to appropriate stakeholders, including the individual learner, in language that is clear and understandable.

Emerging

Some educators use common grading practices and criteria to represent the learner's attainment of content knowledge and skills based on data. Formal and informal communication about each learner's progress is sometimes provided to appropriate stakeholders, including the individual learner, in language that is clear and understandable.

Needs Improvement

Few or no educators use common grading practices and criteria to represent the learner's attainment of content knowledge and skills. Communication about each learner's progress is inconsistently, rarely or never provided to stakeholders in language that is clear and understandable.

*Where to find documentation: Student handbook, teacher/staff handbook, progress report/report card examples, parent/teacher communication examples and protocol

Standard 2.11

Educators gather, analyze and use formative and summative data that lead to demonstrable improvement of student learning.

Exceeds Expectations

All educators analyze data from a cohesive set of formative and summative assessments that lead to the demonstrable improvement of achievement and success of individual and collective groups of learners in preparation for the next educational level. All educators consistently use data to modify instruction and transform learning experiences for learners.

Meets Expectations

Most educators analyze data from multiple types of formative and summative assessments that lead to the demonstrable improvement of achievement and success of individual and collective groups of learners in preparation for the next educational level. Most educators use data to modify instruction and transform learning experiences for learners.

Emerging

Some educators analyze data from assessments that improve the achievement and success of individual and collective groups of learners. Some educators occasionally use data to modify instruction and improve the learning experiences for learners.

Needs Improvement

Few or no educators analyze data from assessments that lead to improvement of achievement of individual and collective groups of learners. Few educators use data to modify instruction or improve the learning experiences for learners.

*Where to find documentation: Standardized test results, staff meeting minutes, curriculum discussions and decisions

Standard 2.12

The institution implements a process to continuously assess its programs and organizational conditions to improve student learning.

Exceeds Expectations

The institution implements a formal, documented evaluation process that includes contextually based research and an ongoing and systematic analysis of trend and comparison data related to student learning across the curriculum and organizational effectiveness. The institution uses results from the evaluation process to inform decision-making, improve and refine curriculum, programs, and innovative practices, and improve student learning.

Meets Expectations

The institution implements an evaluation process that includes an ongoing analysis of trend and comparison data related to student learning in most academic areas and organizational effectiveness. The institution uses results from the evaluation process to inform decision-making, improve and refine curriculum and programs, and improve student learning.

Emerging

The institution implements an evaluation process that includes analysis of trend or comparison data related to student learning in some academic areas or organizational effectiveness. The institution uses the results of the evaluation process to inform decision-making and improve and refine curriculum.

Needs Improvement

The institution implements few or no evaluation processes related to student learning or organizational effectiveness. The institution rarely or never uses results for improvement.

*Where to find documentation: Teacher observations, staff meeting minutes, administrative team meeting minutes, surveys

Resources Domain

Standard 3.1

The institution plans and delivers professional learning to improve the learning environment, learner achievement, and the institution's effectiveness.

Exceeds Expectations

Using data from a variety of sources, the institution plans, evaluates the effectiveness of, and uses the results of professional learning to improve practice and learner achievement and increase content and pedagogical knowledge and organizational effectiveness. The institution delivers relevant and job-embedded professional learning for all staff members to improve their practice and achieve institutional goals.

Meets Expectations

Using data from evaluation and supervision processes, the institution plans and evaluates the effectiveness of professional learning to improve practice and learner achievement and increase content and pedagogical knowledge and organizational effectiveness. The institution frequently delivers relevant professional learning for most staff members to improve their practice and achieve institutional goals.

Emerging

Using limited data, the institution plans professional learning to improve practice and organizational effectiveness. The institution sometimes delivers professional learning for staff members related to their position and institutional needs and goals.

Needs Improvement

Professional learning, if offered, is not based on data. The institution rarely delivers professional learning for staff members related to their position or institutional needs and goals.

*Where to find documentation: Professional development opportunities, continuing education opportunities offered to teachers, learning opportunities within the school

Standard 3.2

The institution's professional learning structure and expectations promote collaboration and collegiality to improve learner performance and organizational effectiveness.

Exceeds Expectations

All staff members participate in structured, accountable professional learning communities that focus their discussions on data analysis and use the results of their analyses to improve learner performance and organizational effectiveness. The institution consistently allocates ample resources to provide both formal and informal structures for collaboration.

Meets Expectations

All professional staff members participate in structured, accountable professional learning communities that analyze data and use the results of their analyses to improve student learning. The institution allocates adequate resources to provide formal and informal structures for collaboration.

Emerging

Some staff members participate in professional learning communities that sometimes review data on student learning. The institution provides some resources for collaboration.

Needs Improvement

Few or no staff members participate in professional learning communities. The institution provides few or no resources for collaboration.

*Where to find documentation: Surveys, examples of vertical and horizontal curriculum planning, staff meeting minutes

Standard 3.3

The institution provides induction, mentoring, and coaching programs that ensure all staff members have the knowledge and skills to improve student performance and organizational effectiveness.

Exceeds Expectations

The institution provides, monitors, evaluates, and modifies induction and mentoring programs for all new staff that include performance expectations and are designed to meet individual needs. The institution provides, monitors, evaluates, and modifies coaching and modeling programs that address unique professional practices and organizational expectations for all staff through guidance, support, and feedback from peers and leaders.

Meets Expectations

The institution provides and monitors induction and mentoring programs for new professional staff that include performance expectations and are designed to meet individual needs. The institution provides and monitors coaching and modeling programs that address organizational expectations for all professional staff through guidance, support, and feedback from peers and leaders.

Emerging

The institution provides some induction and mentoring programs for new staff. The institution provides coaching and modeling programs for some staff through guidance, support, and feedback from peers and leaders.

Needs Improvement

The institution provides little or no induction or mentoring for new staff. Instructional coaching and modeling is rarely or never used.

*Where to find documentation: Examples of mentoring, new teacher training, staff handbook

Standard 3.4

The institution attracts and retains qualified personnel who support the institution's mission and vision.

Exceeds Expectations

The institution uses and regularly evaluates a documented and ongoing process that uses data to determine personnel needs, which includes an assessment of talent, qualifications, and assurance of sufficient numbers, to ensure learners' and organizational needs are met. The institution uses and regularly evaluates a deliberate and formalized process to recruit and retain personnel through meaningful learning opportunities, personal growth, financial support, and leadership opportunities.

Meets Expectations

The institution uses a documented process that uses data to determine personnel needs, which includes an assessment of talent, qualifications and sufficient numbers, to ensure organizational needs are met. The institution uses a deliberate and formalized process to recruit and retain personnel.

Emerging

The institution uses a process to determine personnel needs that sometimes includes an assessment of talent, qualifications and sufficient numbers. The institution uses a formal process to recruit and retain personnel.

Needs Improvement

The institution uses an informal process or has no process to assess personnel needs. The institution uses a vague and/or informal process to recruit and retain personnel.

*Where to find documentation: Summary of teachers and credentials, surveys, general summary of pay scale/employee benefits, employee satisfaction surveys

Standard 3.5

The institution integrates digital resources into teaching, learning, and operations to improve professional practice, student performance, and organizational effectiveness.

Exceeds Expectations

Using a variety of data sources, including needs assessments, the institution engages in a comprehensive planning process that focuses on the integration of digital resources into teaching, learning, and operations and evaluates and demonstrates improvements in professional practice, student performance, and organizational effectiveness. The institution provides ample human, material, and fiscal resources and monitors that these resources are appropriately used to effectively integrate digital resources into teaching, learning, and operations.

Meets Expectations

Using a needs assessment, the institution engages in a comprehensive planning process that focuses on the integration of digital resources into teaching, learning, and operations and evaluates improvements in professional practice, student performance, and organizational effectiveness. The institution provides sufficient human, material, and fiscal resources to effectively integrate digital resources into teaching, learning, and operations.

Emerging

The institution engages in a planning process that focuses on the integration of digital resources into teaching, learning and operations. The institution provides some resources to integrate digital resources into teaching, learning and operations.

Needs Improvement

The institution engages in little or no planning focused on the integration of digital resources into teaching, learning and operations. The institution provides few or no resources to integrate digital resources into teaching, learning and operations.

*Where to find documentation: Technology plan (to include inventory, short-term and long-term goals), lesson plans, surveys, examples of technology used by employees (tuition collection, posting grades, etc...)

Standard 3.6

The institution provides access to information resources and materials to support the curriculum, programs, and needs of students, staff, and the institution.

Exceeds Expectations

The institution implements a documented comprehensive process based on research and best practice for the identification, acquisition, use, and updating of appropriate materials and resources aligned to curricular and instructional programs as well as organizational needs and initiatives. The institution provides a wide variety of high-quality resources that are easily accessible and sufficiently address the needs and interests of students, staff, and the institution.

Meets Expectations

The institution implements a documented process for the identification, acquisition, use, and updating of materials and resources aligned to curricular and instructional programs as well as organizational needs and initiatives. The institution provides a variety of high-quality resources that are easily accessible and address the needs and interests of students, staff, and the institution.

Emerging

The institution implements a process for the identification, acquisition, use, and updating of materials and resources. The institution provides a variety of resources that are accessible and address the needs of students, staff, and the institution.

Needs Improvement

The institution has limited or no processes for the identification, acquisition, use, and updating of materials and resources. The institution provides minimal resources that address the needs of students, staff and the institution.

*Where to find documentation: Surveys, technology plan, textbook update schedule, teachers resources

Standard 3.7

The institution demonstrates strategic resource management that includes long-range planning and use of resources in support of the institution's mission and vision.

Exceeds Expectations

The institution implements and evaluates formal planning processes for long-range strategic resource management of budgets, facilities and other organizational needs. The institution demonstrates effective practices for long-range, strategic management of budgets, facilities and other organizational needs in support of the institution's purpose and direction.

Meets Expectations

The institution implements a planning process for long-range strategic resource management of budgets, facilities and other organizational needs. The institution implements practices for long-range, strategic management of budgets, facilities and other organizational needs in support of the institution's purpose and direction.

Emerging

The institution uses a planning process to manage budgets, facilities and other organizational needs. The institution implements some clear practices for management of budgets, facilities and other organizational needs.

Needs Improvement

The institution does not use a planning process to manage budgets, facilities and other organizational needs. The institution implements vague and/or unclear practices for management of budgets, facilities and other organizational needs.

*Where to find documentation: Policies and procedures to obtain resources, strategic plan, budget

Standard 3.8

The institution allocates human, material, and fiscal resources in alignment with the institution's identified needs and priorities to improve student performance and organizational effectiveness.

Exceeds Expectations

The institution has a formal budgeting process that allocates and aligns resources to address priorities for improvement designed to improve student learning and is equitably distributed to meet the needs of students. The institution consistently evaluates and demonstrates effective use of human, material, and fiscal resources to meet the learners' and institution's identified needs and priorities.

Meets Expectations

The institution frequently aligns resources to address priorities for improvement designed to improve student learning and is equitably distributed to meet the needs of students. The institution frequently evaluates and demonstrates effective use of human, material, and fiscal resources to meet the learners' and institution's identified needs and priorities.

Emerging

The institution sometimes aligns resources to address priorities for improvement designed to improve student learning. The institution sometimes evaluates and demonstrates effective use of human, material, and fiscal resources.

Needs Improvement

The institution rarely or never aligns resources to address priorities for improvement designed to improve student learning. The institution rarely or never evaluates or demonstrates effective use of human, material, and fiscal resources.

*Where to find documentation: Budget (school, athletic, extracurricular), hiring procedures, classroom allowance

Assurances

AdvancED Assurances

1. The institution has read, understands and complies with complies with AdvancED Policies and Procedures.
2. The institution has reported all substantive changes in the institution that affect the scope and/or have an impact on the institution's ability to meet the [AdvancED Standards and Policies](#).

Such changes include, but are not limited to:

- * Restructuring (merging, opening or closing) of the institution or institution(s) within its jurisdiction
 - * Mission and purpose of the institution
 - * Governance structure of the institution, including changing to a charter school/school system, being the subject of a state takeover, or a change in ownership
 - * Grade levels served by the institution
 - * Staffing, including administrative and other non-teaching professional personnel
 - * Available facilities, including upkeep and maintenance
 - * Level of funding
 - * School day or school year
 - * Establishment of an additional location geographically apart from the main campus
 - * Student population that causes program or staffing modification(s)
 - * Available programs, including fine arts, practical arts and student activities
3. The institution implements a written security and crisis management plan that includes emergency evacuation procedures and appropriate training for stakeholders.
 4. The institution monitors all financial transactions through a recognized, regularly audited accounting system.
 5. The institution engages in a continuous improvement process and implements an improvement plan.

AISA Assurances

1. The institution meets AISA requirements for instructional days/time.
2. The institution complies with AISA graduation guidelines.

3. The institution complies with AISA personnel requirements.
4. The institution complies with AISA course credit guidelines.
5. The institution complies with AISA student placement/transfer guidelines.

Appendix I

AISA Instructional Day/Time Guidelines

School calendars must provide for a minimum of 175 full school days per year for all students or the equivalent number of academic instructional hours (1,026) for grades K-12, exclusive of privilege days, in-service and holidays.

- In an emergency situation, if school is in session for four (4) hours, a full school day may be counted.
- If at any time the Governor declares a state of emergency for any part of the state, any affected school that is closed as a result and loses instructional days/time will not be required to makeup those missed days or instructional time.
- Schools will be allowed eight (8) early dismissal days per academic year that may count as full instructional days. These are reserved for exam days, enrichment opportunities, parent-teacher conferences or other academic related dismissals. If a school is using academic instructional hour equivalency, adjustments in instruction hours (1,026) have already been made to account for this early dismissal for exam days.
- Any course earning credit toward graduation should meet for a minimum of 140 hours to earn one (1) full credit.

Note: Academic instructional time is defined as the actual time students are in a classroom and does not include any time beyond the instructional setting (ex. time between classes, homeroom, breaks, lunches, advisories, activities, etc.)

Appendix II

AISA Personnel Requirements

- **The following are all possible qualifications for serving as an Administrator in an AISA Accredited School:**

A Masters Degree in School Administration from Alabama or another state with certification reciprocity and attend the AISA Administrator's Conference once every other year or twice in a four year period.

A Bachelor's Degree from a four year college or university and must fulfill the following:

- A. Must attend the Administrator's Conference, which is conducted in June of each year, for three consecutive years.
- B. Upon completion of the initial three consecutive years, the administrator must attend once every other year or twice in a four-year period to remain in good standings.

Note: Attendance at the AISA Administrator's Conference may be substituted for attendance at another approved conference for administrators but the school will be subject to payment of registration fees for attendance at the AISA Administrator's Conference.

- **Instructional and Support Staff:**

- Elementary teachers must have at least a Baccalaureate Degree from a four-year college or university and hold certification (retired or active) from Alabama or another state with certification reciprocity and complete 20 hours of professional development each school year.
 - Elementary teachers of grades 1-6 must be certified in Early Childhood or Elementary Education, beginning with school year 1989. Those employed prior to 1989 who have been continuously employed in their present position are "grandfathered."
 - K-5 teachers must hold Early Childhood or Elementary certification, if employed after January 1, 1994. Those employed as kindergarten teachers before 1994, and are currently teaching kindergarten without the certification, are "grandfathered."
- Secondary teachers must have earned at least a Bachelor's Degree from a four-year college or university and complete 20 hours of professional development each school year.

- Instruction in all advanced curriculum courses must be by persons teaching in their major field of study, area of certification or any discipline in which 24 semester hours of college credit have been earned.
- Instruction in junior high and/or general curriculum courses must be by persons with 18 or more earned semester hours of college credit in the specific discipline taught. Teachers may teach a subject with 12 hours of college credit if it is the minor part of the instructional day.

Note: Instructional staff members and/or part-time personnel who do not meet the above requirements must work as teacher's aides only. A teacher's aide must work under the direct supervision of a certified and/or degreed AISA professional in the area of assignment. **(Beginning with the 2019-2020 school year, AISA will offer an AISA teacher certification program)**

- **Librarians/Media Specialists**

- All Librarians/Media Specialists must have at least a Bachelor's degree from a recognized college or university, complete 20 hours of professional development annually and must comply with the following requirements:
 - Must hold current Library/Media Specialist certification from Alabama or another state with certification reciprocity.
 - (or)
 - Have a portfolio of educational and professional accomplishments, documenting a highly qualified level of expertise.
 - (or)
 - Earn a minimum of 24 clock hours of in-field (media services) and/or related fields of professional development during the school year or complete at least six (6) semester hours of college credit each year while working toward compliance for the position.

- **Guidance Counselors**

- All Guidance Counselors must have at least a Bachelor's degree from a recognized college or university, complete 20 hours of professional development annually and comply with the following requirements:
 - Must hold current guidance certification from Alabama or another state with certification reciprocity.
 - (or)

- Have a portfolio of educational and professional accomplishments, documenting a highly qualified level of expertise.

(or)

- Earn a minimum of 24 clock hours of in-field and/or related fields of professional development during the school year or complete at least six (6) semester hours of college credit each year while working toward compliance for the position.

- **Support Personnel**

- Properly trained support personnel (e.g. clerical, custodial and child nutrition) shall be employed to ensure a safe, clean school environment and smooth administration of the school.

Note: The AISA **recommends** the following personnel requirements for administrative and Support personnel.

Membership	1-249	250-499	500-749	750-999	1000-1249	1250-1499	1500-up
Principal or Headmaster	1	1	1	1	1	1	One (full-time equivalent) staff member shall be added where needed for each additional 250 students over 1,500.
Administrative Assistants	0	.5	1	1.5	2	2.5	
Guidance Professionals	.5	1	1.5	2	2.5	3	
Library or Media Specialists	.5	1	1	1	2	2	
Library or Media Aides	0	.5	1	1	1	1	1
Secretaries or Clerks	1	2	3	3.5	4	4.5	4.5
Custodian or maintenance	1	In addition to one full-time custodian, custodial and maintenance shall be provided in such numbers that the school facilities are adequately cleaned and maintained.					

Appendix III

Course Credit Guidelines

- Students (grades 9-12) in a required course must pass the course or make arrangements to repeat the course prior to graduation. Each student successfully completing a one semester course will earn one-half (1/2) unit of credit and those completing a one credit course will earn one (1) unit of credit.
- Courses must be designated as one credit courses or one-half credit courses. One credit courses are either passed or failed in their entirety. Semester courses earn one-half (1/2) unit of credit. One unit courses do **not** assign credits for semesters.
- No student may earn more than ten (10) credits toward graduation during any calendar year beginning September 1 of each year.
- A student may not earn credit through external academic programs unless the program is accredited by AdvancED or another Department of Education approved accrediting agency.
- Credits toward high school graduation are not awarded for independent study programs that are not supervised, do not follow a standard course of study and are not approved by the school administrator through existing school policy.
- Dual Enrollment (with credit earned in high school and college) in an AISA accredited school is acceptable only under the following conditions:
 - Dual Enrollment is possible only in AISA-accredited schools that have Board policies allowing the practice.
 - AISA schools should adopt Alabama State Code Guidelines for Dual Enrollment to remain consistent with statewide policy.
 - Written approval from the administrator (or his/her designee) for dual enrollment for each specific course must be placed in the student's cumulative folder at the school prior to enrollment in any course at the college/university.
 - In awarding high school credit, the following criteria will be applied:
 - a. One quarter = 1/3 unit
 - b. Two quarters = 2/3 unit
 - c. Three quarters = 1 unit
 - d. One semester = 1/2 unit
 - e. Two semesters = 1 unit
- For credits to be given in laboratory science courses, students must engage in traditional hands-on laboratory activities on a regularly scheduled basis. Science courses in Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Physical Science and Anatomy/Physiology must include the prescribed curriculum and learning Activities supported by a traditional textbook and a correlated laboratory manual.

- An AISA-accredited school may develop and implement a Local Board Policy that allows up to two of the elective units for graduation to be earned through work/study during the regular school year. If such an option is pursued by a Local Board, the following minimum requirements must be met:
 - For each ½ unit of credit awarded, a minimum of 180 clock hours of on-the-job activity must be documented.
 - The maximum number of elective credits that can be earned through this option is two (2).
 - The Local Board must have a policy that includes the following:
 - Appropriate limits should be set for compensation for the student.
 - Acceptable potential job assignments that are in proximity to the school should be identified.
 - Credits for work/study may be earned only during the regular school year of the eleventh and twelfth grades. (Note: One credit may be earned each year).
 - A work/study student must be enrolled in at least five (5) regular curriculum courses each day.
 - A plan must be in place that provides regular supervision of the student and interaction with the employer by a paid member of the professional staff of the school. The paid professional staff member and the student's employer will function as a mentoring and evaluating team. The employer will provide input to the staff member concerning the grade to be given to the work/study student.
 - The relationship involving the school, the student and the employer ends at the end of the school day; however, the student's work day may extend after school hours.
 - Written approval from the administrator (or his/her designee) for work/study credit to be awarded must be placed in the student's cumulative folder at the school prior to the beginning of the work/study experience. A copy of this written approval must also be filed in the AISA office.
- Administrators and/or counselors shall monitor each student's progress in Grades 9-11 to assure a sufficient number of credits to enter Grade 12 and to be a viable candidate for graduation.
- Administrators shall encourage all students to select their electives with consideration toward long range/career objectives.

- No credit may be awarded for study halls or student aide positions (unless part of an organized volunteer services program) and those students shall have appropriate adult supervision at all times.
- A student cannot be a valid candidate for graduation unless he/she is continuously “on-roll” in the member school.
- Member schools are not authorized to issue diplomas based on completion of the GED or other types of examinations or on the completion of any given number of years of schooling.
- Schools may develop their own grading structure but the AISA suggested grade structure is as follows:

A = 90-100

B = 80-89

C = 70-79

D = 60-69

Appendix IV

STUDENT PLACEMENT/TRANSFER GUIDELINES

- A Transfer student may be accepted and placed **temporarily** in accordance with a report card or a grade sheet that is hand-delivered by the student and/or parents; however, the official transcript must be received from the previous school for official placement in a grade (elementary) or in specific courses (secondary). If the official transcript is not received within six weeks after temporary enrollment/placement, the school may move the student to a lower placement, or, if deemed appropriate, inform the parents that the student's instructional/educational needs do not match the mission and/or the admissions policy of the school. If there is not a match between student instructional/educational needs and the school's mission and/or its admissions policy, the student can be refused official admission.
- Have a written first grade and five year old kindergarten (K5) age entry policy. AISA recommends that students entering K5 be five years of age before October 1st or students entering first grade be six years of age before October 1st. Schools should consider state law for public schools when developing age entrance policies to maintain consistency with other state academic programs.
- A senior transferring into an AISA school must be a viable candidate for graduation from the school he/she is leaving. For example, if the school is an Alabama public school, the student must have passed all required courses through the 11th grade, so that all course work requirements for graduation can be met during the senior year at the AISA accredited school.
- Transfer students from non-traditional schools, PACE programs, and/or from home schooling must provide notarized statements of grade level(s) (elementary) and/or courses/subjects (secondary) completed. Students may be temporarily placed while their progress is evaluated to determine in changes to their placement are necessary. If changes are necessary, school administrators should take great care to not disrupt the student's learning.
- The school accepts and classifies transfer credits or grade placements from schools that are accredited by regional accrediting agencies that are part of AdvancED or the National Council for Private School Accreditation (NCPSA) without further validation.
- **Schools shall honor grading scales, practices and credit awarded from the transferring school and it is not permissible to adjust a transfer students grades/credits to meet their own standards.**

Appendix V

Graduation Guidelines

- Each student who graduates from an AISA accredited school must earn a minimum of twenty four (24) credit hours to receive a diploma. The following units must be included in the credits earned:

CORE UNITS REQUIRED

English Language Arts	4
Must include the following:	
American Literature	
English Literature	
Mathematics	4
Must include the following:	
Geometry	
Algebra II	
Science	4
Must include the following:	
A Laboratory-Based Biological Science	
A Physical Science	
Social Studies	4
Must include the following:	
American History	
American Government	

Notes:

1. AISA Graduation Guidelines are intentionally broad to give schools the flexibility to create their own diploma requirements and guidelines that best fit their independent missions. When developing guidelines, schools should consider statewide requirements, college admission requirements, NCAA requirements and career preparedness. Additionally, schools may choose to develop different diploma paths and standards (standard diploma, college prep diploma, advanced diploma, honors diploma, etc.) These guidelines should be clearly noted in student/parent handbooks and materials.
2. The following subjects may be taken below the 9th grade for credit toward graduation so long as they carry the same rigor as a high school course: Algebra I, Geometry, Introductory Computer, **Health** and Foreign Language. This is a school decision approved by school's board.

3. For credits to be given in laboratory science courses, students must engage in traditional hands-on laboratory activities on a regularly scheduled basis. Science courses in Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Physical Science and Anatomy/Physiology must include the prescribed curriculum and learning activities supported by a traditional textbook and a correlated laboratory manual.
4. Member schools are not authorized to issue diplomas based on completion of the GED or other types of examinations or on the completion of any given number of years of schooling.
5. Subjects taught by tutors will not be counted toward AISA graduation requirements.
6. Credits earned toward graduation in a summer school program must be from a program that is approved by the State Department of Education, *AdvancED*, *NCPSA* and/or sanctioned in writing by AISA office.

Appendix VI
State of Alabama
Dual Enrollment Guidelines

Dual Enrollment - Postsecondary Institutions: Local boards of education may establish dual enrollment programs allowing certain high school students to enroll in postsecondary institutions in order to dually earn credits for a high school diploma and/or a postsecondary degree at both the high school and participating postsecondary levels. The dual enrollment program is open to all students meeting the following requirements:

(a) Eligible Students. Students participating in a dual enrollment program shall pay normal tuition as required by the postsecondary institution and shall meet the following requirements:

1. Have a “B” average, as defined by local board of education policy, in completed high school courses;

2. Have written approval of the student’s principal and superintendent; and

3. Be in grade 10, 11, or 12 or have an exception granted by the participating postsecondary institution upon the recommendation of the student’s principal and superintendent and in accordance with AAC Rule 290-8-9-.17 regarding gifted and talented students.

4. Students enrolled in Grades 10, 11, or 12 who do not have a “B” average in completed high school courses may be deemed eligible to participate in dual enrollment courses pending demonstrated ability to benefit as documented by successful completion and placement identification on assessments approved by the Department of Postsecondary Education. Students eligible under this section will be restricted to pursuing career/technical and health-related courses. Students enrolled under this provision must have earned a “B” average in high school courses related to the occupational/technical studies, if applicable, which the student intends to pursue at the postsecondary level and have maintained an overall grade point average of 2.50. Students enrolled under this provision must have written approval of the student’s principal and superintendent.

(b) Course offerings.

1. Courses shall be postsecondary/college level. Postsecondary/college level remedial courses shall not meet the requirements of this program.

2. Students enrolled in courses offered during the normal high school day on or off the high school campus shall have prior permission of the student’s principal, superintendent, and the participating postsecondary institution president.

3. Local boards of education shall adopt policies addressing parental permission and travel for courses offered off the high school campus during the normal school day.

(c) Credits. One (1) three semester hour postsecondary/college level course shall equal one (1) high school Carnegie credit in the same or related subject. In the case of English 11 and 12, additional action is required. (See ALSDE memo on following page for more information.)

Partial credit agreements shall be developed between the local board of education and participating postsecondary institutions.



STATE OF ALABAMA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



Thomas R. Bice
State Superintendent of Education

April 3, 2015

MEMORANDUM

TO: City and County Superintendents of Education

FROM: Thomas R. Bice *TRB*
State Superintendent of Education

RE: Credit for Dual Enrollment Courses

On March 11, 2015, the Alabama State Board of Education amended the *Alabama Administrative Code*, Rule No. 290-3-1-.02, pertaining to secondary course credit awarded for postsecondary course work through dual enrollment. The new rule is "One (1) three semester hours postsecondary/college-level course shall equal one (1) high school Carnegie credit in the same or related subject."

In the case of English 11 and English 12, additional action is required. Local education agencies may determine, in conjunction with the postsecondary institution, how credit for English 11 and/or English 12 is awarded.

Several options are available:

- English 101 + a literature course = English 11 or English 12 (depending on the student's grade level)
- English 102 + a literature course = English 12
- English 101 + English 102 = English 11, then 2 postsecondary-level literature courses = English 12
- English 101 + locally documented literature to match grade-level literature content = English 11 or English 12 (depending on the student's grade level)
- English 102 + locally documented literature to match grade-level literature content = English 12

If you have questions, please contact Dr. Philip C. Cleveland, Director, Career and Technical Education/Workforce Development, by telephone at 334-242-9116 or by e-mail at pcleveland@alsde.edu or Dr. Julie Hannah, Director, Office of Student Learning, by telephone at 334-353-1608 or by e-mail at jhannah@alsde.edu.

TRB:PCC:MS

cc: Dr. Philip C. Cleveland
Dr. Julie Hannah

FY15-1014

Alabama
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Appendix VII

ALABAMA INDEPENDENT SCHOOL ASSOCIATION INTERPRETATIONS /RULINGS/OPINIONS

Verbal opinions/statements by the AISA staff on interpretations/rulings/opinions concerning academic, accreditation, and athletic matters are unofficial. A verbal opinion or statement by the AISA office is not an official ruling!

The AISA office receives numerous questions concerning academic, accreditation, and athletic matters. We attempt to answer according to the information provided over the phone. Unfortunately, there are times we do not receive the “full story”. Official rulings are made in writing only after the appropriate procedure is followed. This helps us all be on the “same page”. Verbal opinions are not official!

Official rulings/interpretations/opinions are given after a written request by the school administrator is provided the AISA office with all the facts and documentation. Action taken may include official rulings/opinions, investigation of a policy, and/or sanctions for violations/infractions of rules and policies.

After reviewing/investigating the written request, school documentation and applicable standards/policies, the AISA office will respond in writing to the school administrator. Any sanctions placed on a school by the AISA Executive Director for academic, accreditation, and athletic standard and/or policy violation will only be made after concerned parties are provided the opportunity to provide a written response. Schools receiving sanctions may appeal to the appropriate committee (accreditation/athletic).

Remember: The AISA staff welcomes your calls for advice, but our opinions are based on our conversation. A verbal opinion or statement by the AISA office is not an official ruling.

Appendix VIII

ALABAMA INDEPENDENT SCHOOL ASSOCIATION NOTICE TO PARENTS AND OTHERS REGARDING AISA'S RESPONSIBILITY TO MEMBER SCHOOLS

The Alabama Independent School Association (AISA) has served independent schools since 1970 by focusing on excellence in academics, athletics, and accreditation and providing member schools and students with services, and programs. Member schools have voluntarily joined the AISA and follow the guidelines and standards in order to provide an effective school program.

All complaints concerning a school's local decisions should be made at the school level (i.e. teacher/administrator/board). The AISA office will not interfere in the daily operations of the school. Complaints by parents and teachers concerning local decisions will be referred to the school administrator. In order to meet the AISA's obligations and responsibilities to our member schools, parents and others with concerns should direct inquiries to their school.

The Alabama Independent School Association (AISA) acknowledges that an essential characteristic of every member school is its independence. Furthermore, the Association has no desire ever to diminish individual school autonomy.

Appendix IX

ALABAMA INDEPENDENT SCHOOL ASSOCIATION APPROVED SCHOOLS

According to AISA Course Credit Guidelines, the AISA will approve credits for graduation from the following schools/programs. Transfer students admitted from any other school must be admitted as a temporary student. (See Student Placement/Transfer Guidelines)

The Head of School has the ultimate responsibility to approve all credits for graduation.

All AISA Member Schools

(see website www.aisaonline.org)

All AdvancED Accredited Schools

(see website www.advanc-ed.org)

All Public Schools

(see website www.alsde.edu)

All NCPSA Accrediting Agencies

(see website www.ncpsa.org)

Appendix X

Restitution Rule:

Any Alabama Independent School Association member school or member school employee that sues the AISA or is involved in a legal action against the AISA shall pay all legal expenses incurred by the AISA if the AISA is exonerated.

(Passed by the AISA State Board of Directors, September 26, 1998.)

Appendix XI

Additional Recommendations for all AISA/AdvancED Accredited Schools

- A written policy outlining the selection (hiring) and termination (firing) of all personnel.
- A written policy requiring a criminal background check on all school employees in accordance with the Child Protection Act.
- A written employee/employer contractual agreement including review, dismissal and appeal procedures.
- A written admission policy, which clearly defines all enrollment criteria including a non-discriminatory policy, and supports the school's mission statement.
- A written policy requiring the annual development of a Parent/Student Handbook.
- A written policy requiring the annual development of a Faculty Handbook.
- A written policy for safeguarding school's inventory of equipment and supplies, corporate records, minutes, deeds and other important papers.
- A written policy for securing student transcripts, teacher grade books and attendance records. Student data should remain in the "active file" for a minimum of five (5) years following graduation.
- A written policy requiring adequate insurance coverage to include general liability, professional liability, property, workers' compensation, student accident, vandalism, etc.
- A written policy stating the maximum pupil/teacher ratios at each grade level.

AISA recommendations:

Kindergarten	20/1
Grades 1-3	22/1
Grades 4-6	25/1
Grades 7-12	28/1