

ATLANTIC UNION CONFERENCE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION



Accreditation Handbook



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INTRODUCTION

Overview of Accreditation



The Adventist Accrediting Association (AAA) is the denominational accrediting authority for all educational institutions operated in the name of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. It fosters close cooperation among the educational institutions of the Adventist system and effective working relationships with other educational organizations or institutions, accrediting agencies, and government departments of education.

The AAA provides a process by which the educational community holds an institution accountable for its own objectives. It assures the church and constituency that an accredited Adventist educational institution offers programs of quality to the youth of the church and provides professional personnel who meet both church and national/provincial standards. This process ensures a basis for reciprocity among Adventist schools.

The Standards for Accreditation of Seventh-day Adventist Schools are the basis for continuous school improvement evaluation and accreditation of all educational institutions in the North American Division.

Standards for Accreditation

Rationale

The continuous school improvement process provides all schools in the North American Division with a robust structure for reflecting upon programs and practices, raising quality, achieving excellence, and delivering better outcomes for our learners and their families. The Standards for Accreditation for Seventh-day Adventist Schools is a dynamic, research-based tool designed to assist schools in the process of self-assessment that is context-specific, evidence-informed, and outcomes-focused. In this process, the instrument provides a focus through which schools evaluate the extent to which they are meeting stakeholder expectations, delivering on system, school, and community priorities, and implementing continuous school improvement goals and initiatives (Quality Adventist Schools Framework, 2013).

1. Philosophy and Mission

The philosophy, mission and vision statements are learner-centered and give direction to the school's program, and are developed and approved cooperatively by the administration, staff, and school board and reflect the Seventh-day Adventist worldview, core values, and educational philosophy.

2. Curriculum

The curriculum is the core of the educational program providing for the spiritual, mental, physical, social, and emotional development of learners and preparing them for this world and for eternity.

3. Instruction

The instructional program is aligned with curriculum design and assessment practices and provides for a variety of learning experiences, consistent with the school's philosophy, goals, and standards and actively engages learners in learning.

Standards for Accreditation

4. Assessment

Assessment data informs changes in curriculum and instruction to support learning.

5. Sustainable Leadership

Administration and school board ensure the effective and successful operation of the school to promote learner success and well-being.

6. School Environment

The school environment is designed and maintained to promote learner learning and to support the school's mission and goals.

7. Professional Learning

Administration and faculty collaborate to develop and implement professional learning opportunities to meet the needs of each learner and enhance to ongoing growth and development of school personnel.

8. Communication and Collaboration

Communication and collaboration among the school, constituency, and community are essential to providing an effective educational program for learners.

9. School Improvement

The accreditation process assists a school in appraising the total program to determine the level to which the purposes and functions outlined in its statement of philosophy and goals for learner learning are accomplished as well as in providing the basis for the goals in the continuous school improvement plan to address areas needing improvement.



ACCREDITRAC 2.0

Accreditation Instrument

Accreditrac 2.0 is the digital hub that houses the accreditation instrument for SDA schools, streamlines self-assessment based on nine key standards, and supports effective, continuous school improvement within the NAD's accreditation cycle.

The instrument can be accessed at: <https://nad2.accreditrac.com/>

Accreditrac 2.0 is the platform where the school will complete the school profile and self-study report, upload evidences, and upload its continuous school improvement plan. The visiting team will record its observations using the same instrument. Also, reports for current and past accreditation visits can be generated.

The union or conference office of education will choose the visiting team members and grant them access to Accreditrac 2.0. In addition they will grant the principal access to Accreditrac 2.0. This can occur up to a year before the visit date. The principal will then add team members to the coordinating and standards teams.



“The process of accreditation makes good schools better and great schools even greater. Equally important, it can place a poorly performing school on a path to improvement. Accreditation is what every school should be doing to help ensure that every learner gets the quality education they deserve.”

***(Henry G. Cram, Ed. D.,
President, MSA-CESS)***

Continuous School Improvement Plan

Continuous School Improvement Plans (CSIP) are a vital outcome of the accreditation process. A CSIP answers the question: “How are we going to get to where we want to be?” in the continuous school improvement cycle. The CSIP is necessary to implement the shared vision of the school’s stakeholders. The development of a CSIP provides the school an opportunity to transform its vision of excellence into strategic action steps that introduce change and create a higher level of internal accountability. The CSIP is comprised of multiple goals that align with one or more of the Standards for Accreditation of Seventh-day Adventist Schools and the school-wide learning outcomes. Each goal is further delineated to include specific objectives, measurements, tasks or action steps, person(s) responsible, resources, and timeline. In addition, the template allows for space to document progress on the objectives. The board and administration are responsible for creating and implementing the CSIP in response to the data analysis and the identified needs of the school program. During the year of the Accreditation Visit, the needs as described in the Self-study Report should also be taken into consideration when creating or revising the CSIP. Administration, in collaboration with the school board, will annually review and update the CSIP.

The CSIP template can be accessed on the Adventist Education website at <https://adventisteducation.org/resources/22670>



CONTINUOUS SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN			
School Name:		Principal:	
Website:		Contact email:	
School Mission:		School Vision:	

A COOPERATIVE PROCESS

Committees

Coordinating Committee

The Coordinating Committee is appointed by the school board and is composed of the principal and representatives from the faculty and school board. The size of the committee may vary according to school size. The committee is responsible for:

- Appointing 3-5 members to serve on each Standards Assessment Team.
- Coordinating and monitoring the self-study process to ensure completion of the Self-Study Report according to an approved timeline.
- Analyzing data to identify and build consensus on significant school-wide areas needing improvement.
- Overseeing the development of a Continuous School Improvement Plan (CSIP).
- Establishing an ongoing follow-up process to monitor the implementation, refinement, and fulfillment of action plans.

Standards Assessment Teams

The Standards Assessment Teams are appointed by the Coordinating Committee and are composed of staff, parents, and school board members and are responsible for assessing the school in the nine standards which are the core of the evaluation process. Team members should be knowledgeable of the continuous school improvement planning as well as of the mission, operation, successes, and challenges of the school. Qualified representatives from the varying grade levels should be included as team members. The task of each Standards Assessment Team is to complete the section of the Self-study Report for the standard to which they are assigned.

Visiting Team

The Visiting Team is appointed by the conference or union office of education and is composed of educators from the conference or union. The team will read the Self-study Report and validate what they read through observation, checking evidences, and interviews. They will then prepare a report for the school with their findings and recommendations. Finally they will decide on a recommended term of accreditation to be approved by the North American Division Commission on Accreditation.

VISITING TEAM'S RECOMMENDATION

Terms of Accreditation

After the accreditation visit, the visiting team will recommend a term of accreditation. The recommendation will be reviewed by the Atlantic Union Conference Office of Education Accreditation Review Committee, and then passed on to the North American Division Commission of Accreditation for final approval. The terms of accreditation available are below.

Six-Year Status

There is evidence that the school has high-quality Continuous School Improvement processes in place that support student learning and implementation of the CSIP. An annual progress report on the recommendations and CSIP will be submitted.

Six-Year with a Mid-cycle Visit

There is evidence that the school needs additional support in strengthening student learning and implementation of CSIP. An annual progress report of the recommendations and CSIP will be submitted and an on-campus visit in three years.

Special Circumstances:

1. The visiting committee has the option of assigning a focused visit in the first year to assess special circumstances, such as finances, lack of CSIP, enrollment trends, etc.
2. In special cases, mid-cycle visits may be recommended to occur on the second and/or fourth years of the accreditation cycle.

Probation

A school may be placed on probation for one or two years.

One Year: There is compelling evidence that the school has not met the standards for accreditation criteria in one or more critical area(s) requiring immediate attention and support. A visit at the end of the year of probation shall result in either continuation of the accreditation cycle or denial of accreditation.

Two Year: There is compelling evidence that the school has not met the standards for accreditation criteria in one or more critical area(s) with the recognition that improvement may take up to two years. There will be a visit at the end of the second year of probation. This visit shall result in a continuation of the accreditation cycle or denial of accreditation.

Accreditation Denied

Denial of accreditation is based on evidence that the school does not or could not reasonably meet the standards for accreditation.

Checklists

Before the Visit

During the Visit

After the Visit



BEFORE THE VISIT

Principal's Checklist

- Cooperate with the conference and/or union offices of education in selecting the date for the evaluation visit and informing the school board and staff.
- Lead the school board in a review of the previous Visiting Team Report, Interim Review, or Revisit Report, and determine the status of each recommendation.
- Arrange for the school board and staff orientation, including the Continuous School Improvement Plan (CSIP) development, with the conference and/or union offices of education.
- Make recommendations to the school board for membership on the Coordinating Team. This team may be composed of the following:
 - The principal as chair or co-chair
 - Teacher and school board representatives from the standards assessment teams.
 - Parents and other constituent church members.
- Develop a timeline for completion of the Self-study Report. Plan 8-12 months for the process.
- Establish standards assessment teams for each of the nine sections of the Self-study Report. Where possible, the teams (3-5 members) are to represent staff, parents, and school board members. Consider adding learners.
- Distribute the following materials to the chair of each standards assessment team:
 - Access to Accreditrac 2.0 - for help go to <https://support.datarollup.info/category/accreditrac>
 - Instructions for completing section
- Assist the Coordinating Team in the preparation of the CSIP.
- Seek school board approval for the CSIP developed during the preparation of the Self-study Report.

BEFORE THE VISIT (CONTINUED)

Principal's Checklist

- Complete the School Profile section of the Self-study Report.
 - Complete the Progress Report section of the Self-study Report.
 - Lead the Coordinating Team in copy editing the final report checking for accuracy and completeness.
 - Seek school board approval of the Self-study Report.
 - Provide notification to the local conference office of education that the Self-study Report is ready for their approval at least 45 days prior to the visit.
 - At least 30 days prior to the visit, make the Self-study Report available to:
 - School board members
 - Faculty and staff
 - Cooperate with the conference and/or union office of education and Visiting Team chair regarding plans for the visit.
 - Housing: The school is responsible for arranging and paying for housing for the Visiting Team.
 - Meals: The school is responsible for arranging and paying for all meals for the Visiting Team. The union and the Visiting Team chair may choose to provide a meal.
 - Computer Access: Prepare to provide internet access and passwords for the Visiting Team.
 - Transportation: The school is responsible for arranging and paying for all transportation for the Visiting Team including mileage or flights, airport transportation, and transportation to and from the hotel to the school.
- NOTE: The Visiting Team chair, union personnel, and superintendents on the Visiting Team will pay their own expenses.
- Collect and organize the evidences. Upload evidences to Accreditrac 2.0, and provide hard copies for the Visiting Team.

DURING THE VISIT

Principal's Checklist

- Provide a private meeting room with tables, chairs, beverages, snacks, internet access information, and the evidences for the Visiting Team.
- In consultation with the Visiting Team chair, arrange meetings of appropriate school groups (administration, teachers, non-teaching staff, student leaders, randomly selected students). Consider having substitute teachers/volunteers available to facilitate time for interviews with teachers.
- Coordinate with the Visiting Team chair in arranging a meeting of the faculty, staff, available school board members, and learner representatives for the exit report of the Visiting Team.



AFTER THE VISIT

Principal's Checklist

- Archive copies of the Self-study Report, the final Visiting Team Report, Revisit Reports, and Interim Review Reports as part of the permanent records of the school.
- Review the Visiting Team Report with the school board, faculty, and staff to prioritize and begin implementation of CSIP and recommendations.
- Review annually the Visiting Team Report and/or the Interim Review or Revisit Report(s) with the school board and maintain an annual written record of progress in implementing CSIP and recommendations.
- Cooperate with the union and/or local conference office of education in setting the date for any required reviews or revisits.



BEFORE, DURING, AND AFTER

School Board Checklist

Before the visit:

- Cooperate with the principal in the evaluation process.
- Participate in a review of the previous Visiting Team Report, Interim Review Report, or Revisit Report, and determine the status of each recommendation.
- Approve members of the Coordinating Committee as recommended by the principal.
- Serve on the Coordinating Committee and the Standards Assessment Teams as appointed.
- Study and approve the CSIP developed in conjunction with the preparation of the Self-study Report.
- In consultation with the local conference office of education, approve budgetary provisions for expenses (i.e. housing, meals, computer access, transportation) connected with the evaluation process.
- Study and approve the Self-study Report to be submitted to the local conference of education.

During the visit:

- Be available as requested by the Visiting Team chair.
- Meet with the faculty, staff, constituents, and the Visiting Team for the exit report.

After the visit:

- Review the Visiting Team report to prioritize and begin implementation of action plans and recommendations.
- Annually review the Visiting Team Report and/or the Interim Report or Revisit Report(s) and maintain an annual written record of progress in implementing the CSIP and recommendations.

HELP

Resources

Accreditrac 2.0

<https://nad2.accreditrac.com/>

Continuous School Improvement Plan Template

<https://adventisteducation.org/resources/22670>

Standards for Accreditation of Seventh-day Adventist Schools

<https://nadventisteducation.org/resources/22661>

Support and User Guide for Accreditrac 2.0

Login to your NAD Dashboard account > go to Dashboard User Guides & FAQ > go to Menu > Choose Accreditrac

