

# Accreditation Information

## Accreditation Philosophy/Policy

At Midway, we believe that our board and staff will remain spiritual and godly whether we choose to pursue accreditation or not to pursue it. Accreditation is an option that 1.) opens doors for our seniors as they make decisions about higher education; 2.) helps us to streamline our program and gives us expert insight about how we can improve in areas that we've never conceived of; 3.) gives us a system to examine every area of our program and feedback from experienced educators; 4.) gives us official recognition of excellence, and 5.) accords us other benefits and privileges.

With all its rewards, accreditation is time-consuming and expensive. School leadership should take care that the requirements of accreditation work do not violate our core values by pulling a great deal of the staff's time away from their families at home and at church. The board and administration recognizes that the daily challenges of teaching and running a school are highly demanding without the added rigors of accreditation work.

Because of this, the administration will schedule accreditation work as much as possible into the calendar as a natural part of the school year, during which teachers expected to work anyway. The administration will ease frustrations by careful planning and training. Also, the administration will listen to the staff as well as provide the staff with feedback on the results of their hard work.

Accreditation agencies provide lists of minimum standards they want to see fulfilled before they will consider the school for full accreditation. The majority of these standards, upon true compliance, will make Midway a better, stronger school. Since Midway has elected to embark on the costly, extensive project of accreditation, it must focus on truly meeting the standards and seek to be forthright in all its reports to the agencies. Aside from the fact that we are Christians who must walk with integrity before God, we want to derive benefit from accreditation in proportion to the time and expense we have invested in it.

Team members conducting official visits to our school will leave further recommendations for improvement. We should treat those recommendations with the same sincerity and openness with which we regard the basic standards.

We have chosen ACSI (Association of Christian Schools International) as our main instrument of accreditation. Only approval from a secular agency, WASC (Western Association of Schools and Colleges), will expand choices for our college and university-bound seniors, but we found that we can go through the Christian agency's self-study process because ACSI has an agreement with WASC. This is a "joint" process of accreditation. We benefit in having ACSI as our instrument because ACSI advises and encourages throughout the process, and it nurtures us in our role as Christian educators. We will encounter complications with having to keep up with two agencies, but so far the benefits outweigh the difficulties.

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ACSI organizes their standards into ten sections. The last section describes a school improvement plan that staff develops at the end of the self-study and finalizes after the committee visit. The standards are generally clear and specific. They emphasize goal-setting, development of a clear-cut curricular program, establishment of an excellent library, development of staff credentials, the creation of formal systems for review, and more.

WASC is a non-government agency which provides a commission made up partly of individuals representing various educational associations. This commission establishes criteria and makes decisions on the status of schools that apply for accreditation.

Schools accredited with WASC are eligible for various privileges. Seniors graduating from accredited high schools can apply to a school in the UC system through the regular channels; they don't have to go through junior college or any other circuitous route to get into UC.

WASC criteria, described in the *WASC Initial Visit Procedures Manual* accessible online ([http://acswasc.org/about\\_criteria.htm#wascriteria](http://acswasc.org/about_criteria.htm#wascriteria)) and are divided into four categories and fourteen sub-categories. WASC focuses on communication with stakeholders, the setting of broad goals, and formal processes for monitoring and announcing progress.

## Current Status

ACSI approved us as candidates in May of 2006. Two members of a WASC team visited us in November 2006. In February 2007, WASC\* let us know that our 9<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> grade program was now a candidate for accreditation. (See the table below for details.) We are planning to begin the self-study in the winter of 2008.

	RECOMMENDATIONS	COMMENDATIONS
<b>ACSI</b>	<p>Move the classroom out of library (done soon after the visit)</p> <p>Finish the board manual (done)</p> <p>Plan for the orientation and training of board members (done; working on details)</p> <p>Finish curriculum docs. (still in process; must be done by spring of 2009)</p> <p>Identify, put into practice, and assess success on schoolwide goals (we identified our schoolwide goals and have a plan for assessing them that we will be putting into practice starting the year of the self-study)</p> <p>Get faculty and staff ACSI certified (will begin applying in December of 2008; we still have a few teachers who need to finish their bachelor's degrees so that they can apply)</p> <p>Develop a technology plan (We've had some ideas for this, but so far, have not yet begun it—it's extensive and detailed)</p> <p>Develop a school-wide improvement plan (this will be a result of the self-study)</p>	<p>--"exceptionally well prepared with the documentation of relevant data"</p> <p>--"It is evident . . . that standards are being implemented conscientiously and aggressively."</p> <p>--"strong progress on curriculum documents"</p> <p>--"enjoyable, creative activities the steering committee has implemented to increase morale and faculty buy-in"</p>

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<b>WASC</b>	<p>“Staff development in applying research-based teaching strategies in the classroom” (we are launching a curriculum committee and a Midway certification program next year to accomplish this)</p> <p>“Staff development in the use of various methods of assessment” (the curriculum committee and certification program will accomplish this)</p> <p>“Additional professional preparation for teachers and administration” (ACSI certification will require this; some teachers and an administrator are already working on this; administration is emphasizing the importance of schooling)</p> <p>“The use of additional methods of assessment to validate student learning and teacher performance” (we’re starting a review cycle during the self-study that will accomplish this)</p> <p>“Increase parental involvement” (we still need to gauge the success of efforts made last year; if needed, we’ll make a new plan for ’07-’08)</p> <p>“Create a coordinated education effort to measure the school’s [success?] in achieving their student learning goals” (our review cycle that begins during the self-study will take care of this)</p>	<p>“The school provides an environment that is safe, caring, and nurturing.”</p> <p>“The administration has provided a clear vision for school improvement and has produced significant improvements in the past five years.”</p> <p>“Parents, staff, and students report that a high level of morale exists at the school.”</p> <p>“The school provides a variety of educational, social, and co-curricular activities to meet the needs of all students.”</p> <p>“It is very evident that the staff is highly dedicated and is working hard to provide a caring environment for their students.”</p> <p>“It appears that the school board, pastoral staff, administration, and teachers are strongly supportive of the school improvement efforts.”</p>
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For even more information on Accreditation:

Contact WASC at:

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