

# TEN QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

## *ABOUT MBS AND ACCREDITATION*

1. **What is accreditation?** Accreditation is recognition from an outside agency that Midway Baptist School is a quality organization because it works toward fulfilling its own mission and goals.
2. **Midway is already a quality school—so why become accredited?** Accreditation serves two main purposes. First, accreditation is an indication to the community that our institution strives for excellence. Second, accreditation ensures that our school is constantly working at serving its students better.
3. **In what specific ways will accreditation benefit Midway Baptist Schools?** Accreditation will help our students in many respects. Primarily, we are seeking to ease their transitions to any colleges or universities that they might choose. Also, the process of accreditation requires that we stop and explore who we are, what we are working to accomplish, and how our methods and programs help us to accomplish it. Then we make a plan to prune and plant and cultivate, gradually streamlining all our activities so that they neatly fulfill the mission of our school. As we engage in this self-examination, we may discover large and small ways we can tweak the program and enhance the students' experience.
4. **How long does it take to become accredited?** Accreditation is a cyclical process that we can continue as long as we desire to maintain official recognition of excellence. As for initial accreditation status, we may be able to achieve a three-year candidacy around the fall of '06. We should be able to wrap up the self-study and get evaluated by the visiting committee during the third year of our candidacy—or sooner, if we're ready. The visiting committee will report to the accrediting commission, who will likely grant us accredited status good for a few years. During those years, we will periodically send self-evaluations to the accrediting commission. These evaluations will show how we are progressing on a self-improvement plan that we created during our self-study and adjusted after the committee visit. In the year before our term of accreditation is up, we will assemble the staff and repeat the self-study. See the "Steps to Success" timeline for more details.
5. **Who is our accrediting agency?** We have discovered that we can become accredited through a joint process involving both ACSI (Association of Christian Schools International) and WASC\* (Western Association of Schools and Colleges). Taking this joint accreditation route ensures that we will receive the benefits offered by both associations. WASC\* and ACSI have worked it out so that we can go through ACSI's self-study but have representatives from WASC as well as ACSI on the visiting committee. We need WASC\* recognition so that colleges, especially the state system, will readily admit our graduating seniors; ACSI is tailored to meet the needs of small Christian schools.
6. **What modifications will we have to make to the ACSI process in order to achieve accreditation by WASC\* also?** One of the major differences in the process for a school that is seeking accreditation from two agencies is the candidacy visit: if the school wants to be granted candidacy status from two agencies, then it needs to have two separate candidacy visits. This should not be a problem—if we've achieved candidacy with ACSI's Christian-school-specific program, we should not have any difficulty being ready for the WASC\* campus visit. WASC\* and ACSI may also differ in the length of the accreditation term granted and in some other areas that remain to be seen, but overall, the two accrediting processes are said to dovetail nicely. (See the visual "How ACSI and WASC\* Work Together.")

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7. **What exactly will Midway Baptist Schools have to do in the next few years to be ready for the committee visit and be awarded accreditation?** For a visual of what will be happening, refer to the flowchart titled "Midway's Accreditation To-Do List." In brief, we will be working to understand the process, getting ready for the candidacy visit, going through the self-study with the entire staff, and creating a self-improvement plan through the self-study.
8. **What immediate actions are being taken to move Midway towards accreditation?** School personnel have **found out as much as they can about the accreditation process.** They have researched literature online, compiled information, met with representatives of an accredited school, asked questions of the associate director of the ACSI regional office, and received and studied ACSI's accreditation manual. Representatives from Midway have also attended ACSI training sessions. After the last session in March, we applied for candidacy. Now we channel much of our energies into **getting ready for visits from ACSI and WASC\* representatives.** We prepared for our spring of '06 candidacy visit by evaluating ourselves using the ACSI standards checklist and by creating a short-term plan to address our weaknesses. When ACSI's Dr. Haddock visited, he was pleased with our progress and reminded us about the projects that still needed work. And now that we're ACSI candidates, we've filled out WASC's\* extensive application to prepare for WASC's\* fall of '06 candidacy visit (our ninth through twelfth grade program is now a candidate for WASC\* accreditation.) Finally, since accreditation involves the entire school community, we are working on **telling you about the accreditation process.** Besides this information, look for updates in the form of MAN accreditation newsletters, presentations at meetings, and more.
9. **If accreditation is recognition that we are fulfilling our own mission and goals, why the "standards" from an outside agency?** Both agencies have requirements for accreditation; ACSI calls their requirements "standards" while WASC\* calls them "criteria." WASC\* criteria are general statements covering four categories, while ACSI standards are more specific and cover ten categories. Both accrediting agencies assume that fulfilling our own mission and goals entails meeting minimum expectations in areas such as safety, student services, the instructional program, school leadership, and more.
10. **What is my role in the accreditation process?** Our roles will become clearer as we continue the process. For an overview of how you may be participating in the process, refer to the chart entitled "How Can I Help Midway Become Accredited?" Teachers will play some of the largest parts in the school-wide effort, as they will contribute to committees and work on their certifications as well as fill out surveys, help create the curriculum guides, and talk to visiting committee members. Parents, students, and board members will be supplying information and ideas as well as serving on self-study committees.

### For More Information

If you want to know more, feel free to ask the office staff for an information packet or for specific documents referred to in this brochure. And you can stay in the loop. You'll occasionally be receiving updates such as the MAN (Midway Accreditation Newsletter). Read your newsletter and you'll get the scoop on Midway accreditation.

Questions? E-mail Angie Birney at: [abirney@midwaybaptistschools.com](mailto:abirney@midwaybaptistschools.com).

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