



DIVISIONAL ACCREDITATION DIRECTOR



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Happy New Year and welcome to 2023! Over the past couple of months, I've been thinking about holidays such as Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's. Holidays have always been important events in my family – as I expect they are in yours. Holidays are times when family from near and far gather together – and it seems they always eat (at least we do!). They are often times away from work and other regular activities, they help bind us together culturally, and they help preserve traditions. Whatever else they do, holidays also mark our passage through life in so many ways. We take photos, do special things together, teach our kids what it means to be “family,” and remember these times fondly. I hope your memories of our recent holidays are good ones that will last for a lifetime!

ACSI's new accreditation protocol, *Inspire*, is nearing completion. The Standards Manual, Chair and Team Handbook, School Coordinator Handbook, and a few other documents are [now available](#) on the ACSI website. Pilot schools will be hosting accreditation teams this semester (the International Division has already had one pilot school team visit). Draft handbooks and documents will be revised in the summer of 2023 based on pilot school feedback, and the full protocol, with all supporting documents, will be released in the fall of 2023 for all schools to use.

An *Inspire* addendum will be created to help explain and contextualize some indicators and other parts of the protocol specifically for international schools. This addendum cannot be completed until all other handbooks and documents have been finalized and may not be available until later in the fall of 2023.

Here's a “sneak-peak” at some new ideas coming with *Inspire* (actually, they are all in the manuals/handbooks on the ACSI website ☺).

- With *Inspire*, there is an intentional emphasis on effectiveness rather than compliance.
- Writing expectations are significantly reduced with *Inspire*.
- Yes, there are 20 standards organized within 6 domains, but there are only 63 indicators. School committees should be organized by domain.

- There are no “critical indicators” in *Inspire* as there were in REACH.
- Schools are no longer asked to write subject (or discipline) narratives as part of the self-study.
- The new term for CSIP is Accreditation Action Plan (AAP). Schools are no longer asked to develop an AAP prior to the team visit. AAP development will begin during the team visit

All schools scheduled to host a visiting team during the 2023-2024 school year will be contacted soon to establish cohort groups, as needed, to provide training in using the *Inspire* protocol.

For some time, we’ve been aware that when using the ePlatform, it is not possible to upload documents directly from a Google or DropBox folder. We’ve tried various options to work around or bypass this problem, but unfortunately, none have been completely successful. At this point, we recommend that school documents be collected on a school intranet (not hosted by Google) from which they can easily be uploaded to the ePlatform.

As always, if you have any questions regarding REACH, *Inspire*, or the accreditation process, please contact either Kim or me directly.

We wish you God’s richest blessings in 2023!

Tim Thompson

ACADEMIC SERVICES NEWS

ACSI Inspire Update

Work on [ACSI Inspire](#) is ongoing. In October 2022, we released the Standards Manual, Chair & Team Handbook, and the School Coordinator Handbook. For schools that are wanting to begin their self-study process, the Standards Manual (with appendices) and the School Coordinator Handbook are the best tools to get started, as they outline the standards, indicators, and many of the expectations for the self-study. We encourage schools to save their work locally, organizing evidence and written portions by domain/standard, until we have updated the electronic platform.

We are continuing to work on the formal training modules; however, we will make introductory training materials available for schools in February. Here is a brief timeline of upcoming elements related to *ACSI Inspire*:

- Spring 2023 – pilot school visits utilizing *ACSI Inspire*; continue to refine supporting documents
- Summer 2023 – revise and finalize documents based on pilot school feedback
- Fall 2023 – full launch of *Inspire*

ACSI Accreditation – A Collaborative Effort

Accreditation is primarily focused on school improvement involving all members of the staff working to gather input from appropriate stakeholders and evaluate data in order to determine strengths of the program, define areas for improvement, set new goals, and remain true to the school’s foundational statements. Faculty are heavily involved in that

process through working on subcommittees. The final self-study represents the input of various stakeholders across the school community and fosters a growth mindset for the future.

Another essential element of the accreditation process is the site visit completed by a visiting team of peer Christian educators. The visiting team chairperson serves as a valuable resource to the school throughout the self-study process and leads the team with the goal of encouraging the school toward school improvement. The visiting team will review the school's self-study, seek to validate what the school has said about themselves, verify that the school is effectively fulfilling ACSI's standards for accreditation, and collaborate with the school on how goals for improvement could be developed into a plan. Participation as a visiting team member is a valuable professional experience that provides Christian educators the opportunity to support another Christian school in their improvement process.

School-Based Professional Development Program

ACSI recently revised the [School-Based Professional Development \(SBPD\) program](#). The SBPD program is available to serve as fulfillment of the K-12 administrator/faculty credentialing and continuing education requirements, in lieu of certification, for ACSI accreditation (REACH Indicators 4.4 and 4.6; *Inspire* Indicator 12.2). The goal of this program is to provide qualified schools the flexibility of managing their school leadership and faculty qualification and continuing education requirements through a well-developed professional development program that is intentionally aligned to schoolwide goals and measured for effectiveness. There are two steps to be fully approved for the program:

- Step 1: Application – The application contains a series of Yes/No questions (allowing follow-up comments as necessary) to determine if the school has the essential pieces in place to successfully operate an approved SBPD plan. (Upon acceptance into the program, an application fee would apply.)
- Step 2: Plan – The plan consists of seven (7) separate sections. We want to see a school's cycle of how a needs assessment informs goals, professional development is designed to meet those goals, and the professional development is evaluated for effectiveness (which will help inform new or updated goals).

ANNOUNCEMENTS



FLOURISHING
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If you are interested in the Flourishing School Instrument developed by ACSI, you may be able to get them at a reduced price if your school qualifies. You may contact research@acsi.org for more information.

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