# REACH ePlatform Quick Reference Guide – School Self-Study

First, you need to identify **members on your accreditation team**. Then, you can add users to your school's self-study team on the ePlatform through the Manage Access button inside the Control Panel.

As you begin the process of the self-study, you have some decisions to make. Will you be the only one using the platform? Will you allow your assistant coordinator and the chairs of each sub-committee to access the ePlatform as well? If you trust everyone to stay in their areas only, you can just show them what sections to work in. If you want to **limit their access**, you may do that. If so, choose the Control Panel icon.
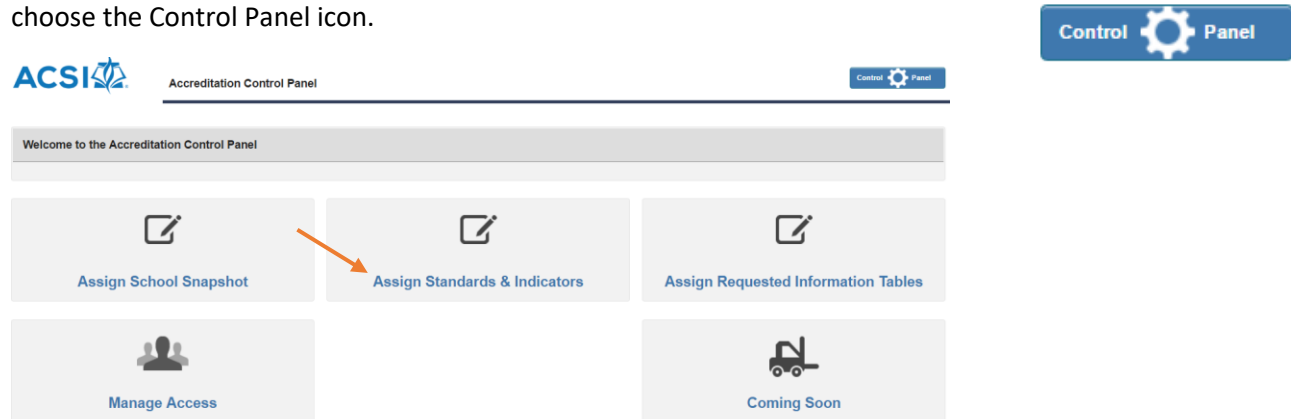
If you choose to limit access for some members, click on the blue text. You will be able to **assign or un-assign** sections to individuals that you have already identified as members of your team.

Let's clear up some terms. In some places, the ePlatform calls the self-study "**Profiles and Standards**." The general information about the school is sometimes referred to as the "**School Snapshot**." Knowing those terms may help.

To the right of the main page, you will see important people listed. If you want to **e-mail those people**, or lists of those people, choose the icon that looks like an envelope. You will see that it allows you to select everyone or just the visiting team.

Back on the main page, you will see **two major sections** of the self-study. The top section includes all the general parts of the report from the Introductory Statement to the Conclusion Summary.

To begin, click the blue "Open" button. Those buttons open each section. You can see when someone last edited each individual section. There is no need to click the "Mark Complete" button until you are nearly ready to submit the entire report.

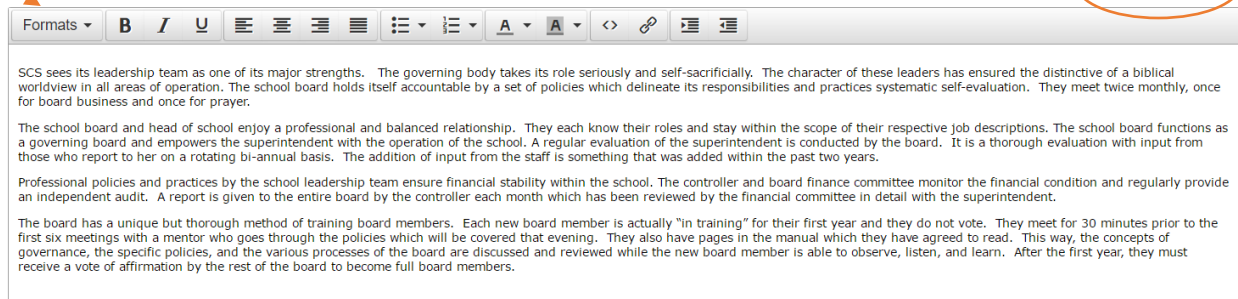| Edit	Item	Last Edit	Status
Open	Introductory Statement	08-23-2016 6:26pm	Mark Complete
Open	Vision, Mission, and Future Goals	08-24-2016 11:54am	Mark Complete
Open	Historical Overview	08-19-2016 9:35pm	Mark Complete

Many of the sections will be answered with a narrative response in a textbox. It works best if only **one person from the team works on a section at a time.** If a second person tries to work on the same section, the platform will tell you that it is unavailable because another person is using it. The program will tell you the name of the individual so you can ask that person to close out.

As you look at a textbox, you will notice that it also says "**View archived versions** (2)." The number in the parentheses shows you how many versions have been saved. If you would like to see previous versions, click on that blue text and you will be able to copy and paste from an earlier version into the current textbox.

The ePlatform does NOT save as you go. There are buttons at the top and bottom of the page to "Save Responses." Those are important! We suggest that you work on original drafts in WORD so that you will be primarily copying to the ePlatform. We found that if we were composing in the ePlatform, we often got "timed out" and lost the work we had written in a textbox. You can, however, edit, correct, add to, etc. in the textboxes. Just be sure to watch your time and save frequently.

In the various sections, you will see that there is a **suggested length** in pages and in words. That helps you know what is expected. However, the document will not cut you off so you don't have to worry. The textbox shows you the word count as you go. Please feel that you can adequately cover the subject, but don't go too much beyond the suggested length. We don't want reports so long that the visiting team can't read them!

There are a number of **formatting options** on the top of a textbox. We suggest that you only use the following styles: Bold, Italics, Underline, bullets, and numbering. If you need to insert a webpage as evidence, then use the symbol that looks like a chain and it will allow you to add a webpage link.

Most areas allow **files to be attached**. There is a blue box that says, "Add Files." Click the blue box, find the file on your computer, click the file, click "Open" at the bottom of the dialog box, then the file will be copied to the section where you added it. (*Note: it is not possible to drag/upload documents directly from a Google Drive into the accreditation ePlatform. We suggest you collect and save evidence locally, on your school's server, organized by folders for each standard, then upload to the ePlatform.)* The visiting team will be able to see this piece of

evidence as they are reading your report online (in HTML or in the PDF version). Only the names of the files print out in the printed version. If you add a second copy of the same file, it will add the link a second time to the entire file. (For large files such as policy manuals, etc. it is helpful to attach single pages that are specifically relevant rather than whole manuals.) Links to webpages must be entered in the textbox at the bottom of each standard. If you want to let the visiting team know that you have already uploaded a file, you can note where that is in the textbox at the bottom of the standard section.

For **reaccreditation visits**, there is a section to update the school's progress on Substantive Changes, the previous CSIP, and the Major Recommendations. See the Sample Self-Study. If your school is going through accreditation for the first time, you do not need to enter anything in this textbox.

Once you have finished all the general sections, proceed to the **Standards and Indicators section**. Each of the Standards sections show the standard first followed by each indicator. These indicators should only be marked after the subcommittee responsible has reviewed all the evidence and come to consensus on what rating best represents the school on that indicator. There is a spreadsheet that is very useful for the steering committee and subcommittees to use to enter their individual scores and come up with a group average. See the documents on ACSI's webpage under School Services, Accreditation, Accreditation, EE-12, School Accreditation Documents, and then choose *Indicator Ratings Spreadsheet for Schools.* Once you have determined what rating is appropriate (EC, C, PC, or NC) you will choose the appropriate radio button and select it. That option will print on the report.


Indicator 2.2:

The governance and executive leadership team of the school reflects Jesus Christ from all board members and executive leadership. (C)

- ○ EC (Exceeds Compliance) Board members and executive leadership and other stakeholders in fulfilling the Christ-centered mission of the
- ◉ C (Compliance) A policy is in place that requires a testimony and evi
- ○ PC (Partial Compliance) Board members and executive leadership h
- ○ NC (Noncompliance) The school does not identify whether board me testimony of faith in Jesus Christ.

You may attach evidence for every indicator. Review the information above on attaching files. When you get to the bottom of the standard, the ePlatform will ask you to check that you have included all **required documentation**. If there is something that you have not included, there is a textbox for explanation. Perhaps it is called by another name, or, if you want to include it at this point, there is one more place to add files.

When you have finished marking a few indicators or writing in a textbox, **be sure to save**! When you have edited a textbox or changed a few indicators, **be sure to save!**

If you have finished with a section and want to return to the home page, look in the upper left corner and you will see "**Report Home**." Clicking that will return you to the main page. It is **NOT** a save button.
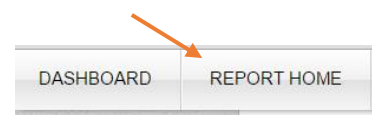
Sections 5 and 6 were so long that they didn't fit into one section. Note that you will find the Narrative, Strengths, and Areas to Improve on the second section for each of those standards. (5.11-5.18)

**Standard 5 has a Part A for the Overall Instructional Program and a Part B for each individual subject area.** Even though the sample school self-study only covers one subject area (reading/language arts), schools need to cover all the subject areas including reading/language arts, math, science, social studies, Bible, and all the major specials that you teach. (You may combine groups like fine arts instead of

covering music, art, drama, separately.) See the Standards Manual and School Administrator's Handbook for more information on how to write Section 5.

Standard 8 is all about the **Continuous School Improvement Plan**. You MUST attach your CSIP. Some schools would prefer to update theirs and send it later. However, you are required to do your best planning now and attach your CSIP to the ePlatform at this time. It is a required document. ACSI's definition of a CSIP is "*A school's specific long-range and short-range goals and plans; strategies for reaching these goals; and assessment, analysis, and reporting procedures to determine whether the goals have been achieved.*" Many schools think of this as the annualized plan that represent the school's part of the strategic plan. It does not primarily focus on the part the board is more involved with, such as future financial planning, buildings, strategy for growth, etc.

If your school has an **Early Education** program included in accreditation, the discussion of the program belongs in the narrative, strengths, and areas to improve in the regular standard sections. However, the indicators with the actual ratings will appear near the end of the report after all the K-12 indicators are finished. This is true for any additional standards/indicators that might be added to the accreditation protocol (online, boarding, etc.). Make sure that the discussion of all standards, indicators, strengths, and areas to improve are the in the regular narrative sections.

If at any point along the way you want to see what the report looks like, you can do that. On the main page, in the upper right hand corner, you will see a button that says "HTML." That will give you a quick look. The button that says "PDF" will **let you see the report in a format** that has been prepared for a printer. It takes a little longer, but that may be what you want to see.
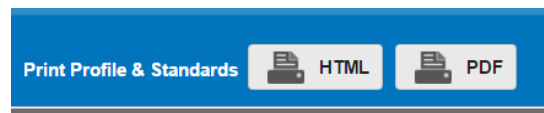
Near the bottom of the main page, you will see a section labeled "Resources for Self-Study Coordinators" (right below Additional Uploaded Files). Below that is a list of **links to REACH 2.1 documents** that will be helpful while the school is working on their self-study. When you click on one of those, you may have to log in to ACSI's site to access the first one. You will want your ACSI password handy. After the first one, the rest should come up easily.

At the very bottom of the page, there is a section labeled "**Requested Information Tables**." These are for the school to fill in the demographic information and their self-study committees. You may list up to 13 different committees and the individuals on those committees (up to 8 people each). If you have a team larger than that, use two lines. These are required.

When the report is ready for completion, we suggest that you print out a PDF copy and give it to at least **two people to edit**. That will help with consistency in wording and style, and they will probably be able to spot inconsistencies in the report from one section to another. As was mentioned earlier, editing can be done in the ePlatform. Just remember to save frequently.

After a section has been edited by at least two people, use the "**Mark Complete**" buttons. If you find you have to Re-Open them, you can.

Once all sections are marked "Complete" and you are satisfied with the final copy (PDF), it is time to click "**Mark Report Complete**." THE REPORT WILL NOT BE ABLE TO BE RE-OPENED BY YOU. You would have to contact your regional accreditation specialist to have the whole report re-opened. Only click on that once you are sure you are finished. Please note that all schools must submit the final self-study to their ACSI regional office six weeks prior to the team visit.