



## *SAES Standards of the Association*

The Standards of SAES reflect the Association's commitment to promoting high standards of education, developing programs that improve knowledge and skills in leadership, governance, administration, teaching and learning, and building spiritual formation through study, fellowship, and celebration. Member schools seeking accreditation must be cognizant of the Standards of SAES and work to meet them. As a matter of both policy and principle, SAES is committed to the highest possible quality of school program and teaching.

*Key Standards* appear below in italics and define the essence of each category. **Essential Criteria** are numbered below to specify focus areas that define each Key Standard.

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| A. Mission                               | G. Administration                        |
| B. The Episcopal Character of the School | H. Finance                               |
| C. Students and Parents                  | I. Facility and Safety                   |
| D. Professional Staff                    | J. The Culture and Climate of the School |
| E. Program                               | K. Accreditation Accountability          |
| F. Governance                            |  |

### **A. Mission**

*A.1. There shall be a high degree of congruence between the stated mission, the philosophy of the school as an educational institution, and its actual program.*

- a. The mission is clearly understood by the administration, professional staff, parents, students and those responsible for governance, and is used in planning and decision-making.
- b. The purposes and objectives for which the school exists shall include a clearly stated educational philosophy that addresses the needs of students and a commitment to creating an environment which encourages freedom of inquiry and the respectful exchange of diverse viewpoints.

### **B. Episcopal Character of the School**

*B.1. The Episcopal identity of the school shall be expressed within its mission and governance structure and organization.*

- a. The mission of the school recognizes that the Episcopal ethos of the school makes a difference in the daily life of the school community.
- b. The school shall clearly define in its governing documents its relationship to the Episcopal Church and its sponsoring organization, if any, and the responsibilities of each. It will provide in its bylaws a clear statement about its church relationship to the vestry, in the case of a parish school, to the bishop in the case of a diocesan or mission school, or as an independent school.
- c. Board members shall participate in an orientation that includes information about what it means to be an Episcopal school, including governance practices and the role of all key leaders, intentional pluralism in admissions, religious programming and worship in the school, the philosophy of open inquiry in instruction, and support for service learning.

d. Schools designated as parish day schools shall clearly define how shared space issues and joint financial obligations are handled (i.e., who pays whom, for what), as applicable.

***B.2 The school shall include both worship and religious studies in its program to reflect a balance of faith and reason in the Episcopal tradition and respect for individual beliefs.***

a. Opportunities shall be provided for regular worship that is age appropriate and in accordance with the Book of Common Prayer, as well as the "Doctrine, Discipline and Worship of the Episcopal Church." There shall be opportunities for student participation in worship.

b. Worship experiences shall be sensitive to the diversity of religious identity represented by students and faculty while remaining faithful to the Episcopal foundation, practices and traditions.

c. The school shall incorporate religious education in its instructional program where both secular knowledge and Christian faith are lifted up, and proselytizing is avoided.

d. Religious studies for older students shall be as rigorous as other academic courses and include Christian foundations, other world faith traditions, ethics and moral reasoning, and religion in American history and contemporary life. Religious studies for elementary programs shall be developmentally appropriate and stress commonalities rather than differences between individuals and cultures.

e. The school shall show evidence of the utilization of its religious goals and objectives in meeting the needs of the school community and providing appropriate pastoral care when needed.

***B.3 The administration of the program reflects the Episcopal commitment to be inviting and welcoming toward students from varied religious, cultural, and economic backgrounds and family situations who would benefit from this program.***

a. The head of school shall hold a personal faith commitment supportive of the spiritual mission and program of the school, shall understand the canonical structure of the Episcopal church, as well as the role and responsibility of the ecclesiastical head of the sponsoring body, and shall act as the primary ambassador and advocate for Episcopal identity.

b. The school's key administrative leaders, including admissions officer, division heads, and development officers are responsible for understanding, communicating and supporting the school's Episcopal identity, especially when representing the school to prospective families.

c. The school's teachers, assistants and extracurricular staff shall understand and support the school's spiritual mission and Episcopal identity. The school shall provide enlightened discourse about what it means to be an Episcopal school so all faculty and staff can express with confidence the school's philosophy with parents, students, and each other.

d. Admission policies in the school shall include good faith efforts to invite inquiries from students of diverse backgrounds, who will benefit from the program. The school shall provide financial assistance to otherwise qualified students who are eligible to enroll, being intentional in its efforts to support this need in the budgeting process.

e. The head of school and rector, in a parish day school, shall seek ways to build a collegial, mutually supportive relationship.

***B.4 The school shall require high standards of professional educational excellence and celebrate the joy of discovery and new learning with the students.***

- a. The culture of the classrooms values the search for knowledge, with the recognition that our understanding from the past may grow and change; the processes of open inquiry, with thoughtful consideration of the questions of others; and the imperative of personal accountability.
- b. The school shall design a curriculum that provides both substantive foundational skills and challenging applications to teach students an appreciation of the common goal of contributing to the well-being of the world which the students will inherit.
- c. The school shall continually encourage professional development in current best professional practices, comprehensive curriculum development, and graceful inclusivity in the relationships between students and faculty, all of which are hallmarks of Episcopal schools.

***B.5 The school shall provide opportunities for student participation in outreach projects.***

- a. Experiences in service learning shall promote recognition that we are all God's children in need of compassion, embraced as brothers and sisters, seeking to be understood, respected, and encouraged.
- b. The school shall explore ways to coordinate efforts with its parish or its diocese to support outreach projects.

**C. Students and Parents**

***C.1. Admission policies and procedures shall be clearly defined and consistent with the stated mission of the school and shall reflect the school's efforts to enroll students most likely to benefit from its program.***

- a. The school shall not exclude students because of race, creed, national origin, or insofar as possible, socio-economic status, in its admission process to the school, or in the administration of any of its educational, financial aid, scholarship, or student activity programs and shall make every good faith effort to encourage an inclusive student body. The school's non-discrimination policies will be published.
- b. There shall be full disclosure of the school's tuition, fees, tuition insurance, all financial obligations, and the policies related to financial aid.
- c. There shall be full disclosure of the school's mission, policies, programs, and practices published in all Handbooks, and these shall be available in the Parent Handbook prior to enrollment.
- d. There shall be a clearly defined process for addressing policies of attendance, grades, and credit for alternative or supplementary courses offered by another accredited institution to any student requiring such enrichment.
- e. The school shall publish its requirements for academic achievement, including all aspects of its grading system. The school shall also publish graduation requirements for high school programs.
- f. Student records shall be safeguarded from theft and fire and shared only with authorized persons. The school shall have a published policy about how long records are kept and the process for obtaining transcripts.

***C.2. The school shall provide effective means and appropriate channels of communicating with parents about all aspects of school life.***

- a. The school shall make a syllabus of the curriculum available to parents.
- b. Student progress shall be reported regularly to parents in an informative and clear manner.
- c. Parents shall be invited to participate in the life of the school through collaborative and supportive activities.
- d. The school shall develop an ongoing relationship with its alumni through regular communications, collection of data on their progress, and invitations to participate in the life of the school.
- e. The school shall encourage awareness of its work in the community through marketing and/or development efforts.

**D. Professional Staff**

***D.1. All faculty and staff shall be qualified for their positions and responsibilities by education and experience and shall engage in ongoing professional development.***

- a. Teachers of infants, toddlers, and preschoolers up to age 3 shall have no less than a Child Development Certificate (CDC or CDA) or an Associate's Degree (AAS) reflecting specialization in child development. Teachers of children age 4 and older shall have no less than an appropriate baccalaureate degree. Assistants and extended care staff are not required to have college degrees but may have other child-care related experience.
- b. The school shall utilize adequate procedures for recruiting, screening and interviewing prospective faculty and staff, and each shall have appropriate criminal background and reference checks. Recruitment shall also encourage good-faith efforts to encourage candidates representing diversity for the school to apply. The Staff Handbook should address school policies on conflict of interest in the hiring process.
- c. The school does not discriminate against any person in employment or otherwise because of race, color, national origin, gender, or age in violation of state or federal law or regulations.
- d. Faculty and staff shall receive an orientation that includes information about their roles and responsibilities, governance organization, school policies including confidentiality and professional conduct, and other information set forth in the Staff and Parent Handbooks.
- e. The school shall have a required program for on-going professional growth and development for faculty, staff, and administration which is related to improved instruction and increased learning.
- f. Each member of the faculty and the staff shall be clearly informed of his /her compensation, terms of employment and primary responsibilities. Every effort will be made to be equitable in terms of the total load of primary responsibilities and other assignments and in the development of fair personnel policies, salaries and benefits. Compensation packages shall be sufficient to attract and retain qualified teachers.

- g. There shall be an understood program of supervision and regular evaluation of individual faculty and staff performance, and understood procedures for non-renewal and/or termination of employment.
- h. Faculty and staff interaction with students shall be appropriate, encouraging, and constructive, and shall reflect the highest standard of professional conduct, recognizing the innate vulnerability of students of all ages.
- i. There shall be adequate procedures for identifying changing needs and priorities that determine faculty and staffing requirements.
- j. The professional staff shall be involved in the review, planning, development and evaluation of the school's programs. There shall be adequate opportunities for communication and focused professional conversations during faculty meetings to facilitate effective collaboration.
- k. All members of the faculty and staff, including extracurricular staff, shall receive training regarding sexual misconduct and child abuse.
- l. Classroom substitutes shall receive an orientation about the school's mission and philosophy, the scope of their responsibilities, and school policies relevant to their responsibilities.

## **E. Program**

***E.1. The academic program shall be developed from the school's stated mission, purposes, and objectives that reflect the educational goals for which the school exists. It shall promote student development in the major domains of human learning: cognitive, social, emotional, physical and spiritual, and shall seek to serve all students through an awareness of developmentally effective instruction.***

- a. The school shall stress the teaching of critical reasoning and independent thinking and shall offer higher level challenge through factual mastery, skill development, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.
- b. The program shall have sufficient instructional flexibility for the capabilities, learning styles, and interests of students enrolled in the school.
- c. The program shall include a reasonable balance of language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, visual and performing arts, foreign language, physical education, computer science, religious studies, and community service. The school's curriculum shall define essential objectives for these and all courses of study.
- d. The school's curriculum shall reflect cognizance of the requirements for education as set forth by the state in which it is located. The school should be prepared to show cause why those which are not included in the curriculum are not applicable to the school.
- e. There shall be procedures for review, evaluation and development of the school's programs, including an assessment of the quality of its instruction methods and evidence of student learning. There shall be good faith efforts to follow up on program graduates to assess the effectiveness of the school's overall program.

- f. Schools that identify students with significant learning differences shall include faculty training, a clearly defined referral process, consultation with any resource staff assisting students, and reasonable modifications as necessary, to guide the students to a successful experience in school.
- g. The school shall have systems in place to assist new students to successfully integrate into the school's academic program.
- h. The school shall provide adequate library resources for the faculty and students, with reasonable time allotments for their use and with applicable curriculum and acceptable use policies in place.
- i. The school shall provide adequate technology resources for the faculty, students, and administration with reasonable time allotments for their use and with applicable training, curriculum, and acceptable use policies in place.
- j. The program shall include experiences that reflect an understanding of our multicultural and diverse society.
- k. The program shall include both instructional elements which address conservation efforts for our world and evidence of a school culture that models environmental stewardship in day to day activities and operations.
- l. The school with a physical education and/or sports program shall have an appropriate number of qualified faculty and staff trained to deal with medical emergencies. All schools shall have staff trained for CPR and minor injuries.
- m. The school shall determine the relevance of program enhancements, such as field trips and travel, and insure that these are planned with the safety of children and adults as a priority.
- n. If the school offers any special programs (summer programs, before or after school programs, sports, tutorials, etc.), these shall be compatible with the school's purpose or mission.
- o. The school shall publish developmentally appropriate behavioral expectations, its plans for corrective action that include communication with parents, consequences for misbehavior, and policies for addressing serious misconduct. The school shall publish policies related to conduct after school hours, if applicable.

***E.2. The program structure shall provide all organizational basics essential to the successful operation of the school.***

- a. The school day and year shall be sufficient for the total school program and in compliance with the laws of the state in which the school is located.
- b. The daily schedule shall provide adequate blocks of instructional and learning time, balanced against non-academic and transitional requirements. Teachers shall have adequate planning and preparation time.
- c. The school shall maintain, or have available for its use, physical facilities and plant adequate to support the program. This should include adequate storage for classroom and outdoor equipment, and safe placement for materials such as chemicals used in science or art for which specific safety guidelines are required.

- d. There shall be a sufficient number of students, faculty and staff for the stated mission and purpose of the school, and class ratios shall be in compliance with sound educational practice and SAES Standards.

***E.3. Program content, student placement, and instructional variations shall be considered in the design of programs for different ages.***

E.3.EC Early Childhood Programs

- a. An early childhood program shall create an environment that facilitates the growth of awareness, exploration, and inquiry, and shall encourage each child's eagerness to learn.
- b. An early childhood program shall include activities balanced between child- and teacher-directed, active/quiet, large group/small group, indoor/outdoor learning activities, and rest-time or naps where required.
- c. The early childhood program shall be based on a curriculum that identifies a reasonable balance of language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, visual and performing arts, physical education, and religious studies. A balance of all disciplines shall be introduced through an integrated curriculum presented in learning centers, with manipulative materials, and by encouraging active participation by the children.
- d. There shall be adequate and safe play/recreation space for children.
- e. Programs shall meet or exceed local and state regulations and licensing requirements, as applicable.
- f. Adult interaction shall recognize the individual, developmental, and spiritual needs of very young children.
- g. Assessment of students in EC classrooms should be limited and administered by trained professionals. Assessment results used for placement or diagnostic purposes shall be kept in the office.
- h. The school shall encourage teachers to recognize the rich variability in maturity and learning styles of young children and use *developmentally responsive practices* with those children who exhibit individual differences from the group.
- i. Group size and staff:child ratios should adhere to the following guidelines.

<u>Age</u>	<u>Maximum Group Size</u>	<u>Staff:Child Ratio</u>
0-12 mo.	8	1:4
12-24 mo.	12	1:6
24-36 mo.	12	1:8
3 yr.	18	1:12
4 yr.	18	1:14
K	20	1:16

E.3.LS Lower School (Elementary) Programs

- a. There shall be a balance of daily academic work and homework that reflects the academic goals of the school and sound educational practice.

- b. There shall be adequate play/recreation space for elementary children and a daily schedule of recess.
- c. The school shall conduct annual standardized testing, communicate the outcomes to parents, review and analyze the results, and address plans for improvements.
- d. Assessment methods of student progress may reflect developmental variances by grade level. Diagnostic testing for learning differences shall be limited to trained professionals, and assessment results used for placement or diagnostic purposes shall be kept in the office.

#### E.3.MS Middle School Programs

- a. There will be a balance of daily academic work and homework that reflects the academic goals of the school and good educational practice.
- b. There shall be adequate advisory and/or counseling programs for student needs.
- c. There shall be placement counseling for graduating students and their families at the terminal grade of the school.
- d. There shall be a variety of extracurricular activities that promote student leadership, talents, and interests.
- e. The school shall conduct annual standardized testing, communicate the outcomes to parents, review and analyze the results, and address plans for improvements.
- f. The middle school shall develop activities, events, or traditions which contribute to its identity and encourage student cohesiveness.

#### E.3.US Upper School (High School) Programs

- a. There will be a balance of daily academic work and homework that reflects the academic goals of the school and good educational practice.
- b. The school shall publish its graduation requirements, including non-academic obligations such as service work.
- c. There shall be adequate advisory and counseling programs for students.
- d. There shall be placement counseling for graduating students and their families.
- e. There shall be a variety of extracurricular activities that promote student leadership, talents, and interests.
- f. The school shall conduct annual standardized testing, communicate the outcomes to parents, review and analyze the results, and address plans for improvements.
- g. The school shall develop activities, events, or traditions which contribute to its identity and encourage student cohesiveness

### E.3.BSP Boarding School Programs

- a. Residential life shall be designed to be consistent with the school's philosophy, mission, and goals, and its policies and procedures are clearly defined.
- b. The school shall provide adequate dormitory facilities and supervision.
- c. Appropriate evening, weekend, and vacation activities shall be offered.
- d. Residential staff shall be qualified to meet the needs of students under their supervision.

### E.3.OSP Other School-Related Programs (Mothers' Day Out, Tutorials, etc.)

- a. Other programs that involve children, not enrolled in the programs listed above, shall meet SAES Standards.

## **F. Governance**

### ***F.1 There shall be provision in the school's bylaws for a board of trustees which shall be elected or appointed according to the clearly established guidelines therein.***

- a. The board shall define the role and responsibilities of its standing and ad hoc committees and assign board members to each. The head of school and board chairman should be members of each committee, ex-officio. Committees should be encouraged to recruit non-board individuals with specific expertise for the work of the Board.
- b. The board of trustees shall develop school policies, maintain financial stability, lead in fundraising, and participate in an annual self-evaluation of its work.
- c. The Board Handbook shall include bylaws and other institutional documents, a summary history of the school, a narrative explaining the role and responsibilities of trustees and their relationship with the head of school, approved policies, and procedures for conducting board business as a mission-driven institution.
- d. The board shall establish procedures for periodic review of its policies and procedures.
- e. The board shall implement a clearly stated decision-making process and define its communication processes outside board meetings.
- f. The board shall generate necessary resources for providing and maintaining safe and adequate physical facilities.
- g. The board shall have processes to provide for ongoing comprehensive strategic planning and an annual review of the status of the plans.
- h. The board should be effectively organized to carry out its fiduciary responsibility to ensure the financial stability of the school and to develop a long-range financial plan.

***F.2 The board shall employ the head of school as its sole employee, delegate the administrative functions of the school to the head of school, and shall respect the boundaries which separate board and administrative roles.***

- a. The board shall nurture and support the head of school with a process of regular communication and annual evaluation based on clearly established criteria and an understood procedure which is ethical and fair and provides for due process. The head of school shall have a written contract which addresses issues of evaluation, compensation, renewal, non-renewal, and termination.
- b. The board shall have a policy concerning protocols for addressing conflicts with the head of school before differences escalate to a crisis stage.
- c. The board shall work cooperatively and supportively with the head of school to encourage a well-planned and reassuring transition for the school during periods of administrative change in the school.

## **G. Administration**

***G.1 An administrative structure shall be developed and organized to effectively manage daily operations and carry out the policies of the board of trustees.***

- a. The head of school shall be qualified by education and experience, preferably with an advanced degree.
- b. The head of school shall employ all faculty, staff and support personnel, and shall be responsible for overseeing a regular evaluation process for all school personnel.
- c. The administration shall be responsible for school programs, personnel, facilities and resources.
- d. Education and experience shall qualify members of the administration for their assigned responsibilities.
- e. The administrative team shall initiate adequate procedures for the review of school organization, administration, instruction, and facilities, and for the determination of short-and long-range needs. The administration shall involve the faculty and staff when appropriate.
- f. The administration shall create an Administrative Handbook that describes roles, responsibilities, operational procedures, financial management systems, admission policies, and other administrative functions.
- g. Personnel records are secured against theft or fire with access limited to authorized individuals. The school shall include in the Administrative Handbook how long records are to be kept.

## **H. Finance**

***H.1 The school shall employ sound financial planning and management policies and procedures, including a formal budget-making process, along with appropriate board of trustees' oversight.***

- a. The school shall be a legal entity or part of a legal entity, which is in compliance with all applicable federal, state, and local laws. It shall acquire and maintain 501(c)(3) non-profit status or be part of an institution that has that status by the Internal Revenue Service.

- b. The school shall employ sound accounting methods and practices as prescribed by GAAP, Generally Accepted Accounting Practices.
- c. All funds generated by any school activity or organization shall be recorded in the school's books of accounts and shall be under the direct control of the school.
- d. The school shall have a financial audit or review annually.
  - Schools with total budgetary revenues of \$500,000 or more shall have an annual, independent audit of the school's financial books by a CPA. Once the school has had an audit, schools may alternate audits and reviews, provided that there are no more than two reviews between audits.
  - Schools with total budgetary revenues of \$500,000 or less may instead have an annual review performed by an independent CPA (see the SAES Small School Financial Review Form.)
- e. The school shall seek to minimize the risk of injury to its students, staff and faculty and shall seek to minimize the risk of financial loss to the school by having a risk management program in place that includes purchasing adequate insurance coverage.
- f. All funds generated through the solicitation of donations or grants, stocks, gifts, or gifts in kind shall be managed according to current regulations, laws, or IRS requirements related to such gifts.
- g. The school shall have policies in place for its budgeting process, including the development of a contingency fund, issues of conflict of interest, delinquent accounts collection, financial aid, all fundraising efforts, and endowment fund investment philosophy and spending policies. All financial policies and procedures should be documented in the Administrative Handbook or Business Manual.
- h. The board shall create long-range financial projections based on items in the strategic plans that have potential financial impact.
- i. The school shall identify any ongoing deficit or long term debt and shall have a plan for addressing these obligations, including appropriate loan documentation, if applicable.

## **I. Facility and Safety**

### ***I.1 The school shall maintain facilities that meet applicable health, fire, emergency, safety and sanitary codes of the city, county and state in which the school is located.***

- a. Outside play areas shall be inspected regularly and their use supervised with a safe ratio of adults to children.
- b. The facility shall receive daily cleaning and maintenance for the health and well-being of the school community. There shall be adequate janitorial support and maintenance for repairs done in a timely manner. The school's campus shall be well maintained and inviting.
- c. The school shall assess the security of the facility and develop policies that address campus access, visitors, supervision, and student movement around campus.
- d. The school shall have crisis plans in place in the event of a serious injury, natural catastrophe, criminal activity, threats, or other significant emergency.

- e. The school shall have policies and procedures in place concerning the release of children to the correct legally designated adults.
- f. The school shall provide health facilities and support staff adequate for the school's programs and shall keep on file updated immunization records for all students. The school shall also have medication storage and dispensing policies.
- g. Food services, if available, shall be licensed and provide nutritionally adequate choices. Staff supervising lunch duty (or EC snacks) shall monitor food brought to school to insure appropriate nutritional standards. Policies for the staff handling, preparing, or distributing food shall reflect healthy practices.
- h. School vehicles, if applicable, shall comply with federal and state laws regulating licensing, registration, insurance, inspections, and capacity.
- i. The supervision of students is a priority in all settings including carpool, transition and break periods, and between classes.

## **J. Culture and Climate**

***J.1 The school shall be a lively center of learning and exploration, acceptance and friendship, reverence and celebration.***

- a. There shall be a strong correlation between the stated mission and/or purpose of the school and the culture/climate that actually exists in the school.
- b. Students shall participate in experiences to develop a social ethic that fosters mutual respect and concern for individual and community rights, regard for property and the environment, and personal integrity and responsibility.

## **K. Accreditation Accountability**

***K.1 The school shall fulfill the requirements of accreditation by providing current Documents of Adherence to Standards, all requested Supplementary Materials, a Self-Study, an on-site visit, and regular accreditation reports.***

- a. The school shall retain its membership in the Association.
- b. The school shall report progress on school improvements noted in the Recommendations of the On-site Visit Report and as required in regular interim accreditation reports.
- c. The school shall complete an updated yearly data form for the Association office.
- d. The school shall communicate any major changes in its program to the SAES office, including a change in head of school or rector of the church, in the case of a parish day school.