



# Standards of the Association 2024

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 spiritual formation.

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## A. MISSION

- A.1 The school has a clear statement of educational mission that is in congruence with the school's Episcopal Identity.

## B. EPISCOPAL IDENTITY

- B.1 The Episcopal Identity of the school is expressed within its mission and governance structure, school organization, and operations.
- B.2 Episcopal Identity is evident in the spiritual, intellectual, and socio-emotional development of all students.
- B.3 The program reflects the Episcopal commitment to being a caring, inviting and welcoming community, which supports varied religious, cultural, and economic backgrounds, and family structures in the school community.
- B.4 The school provides opportunities for student participation in meaningful programs of service to others with respect for the dignity of every human being.
- B.5 The school interacts with the community in which it resides, including the parish (if applicable) and the diocese in which it is located.
- B.6 The school, in both its programs and operations, reflects the Episcopal commitment to a care for God's creation and supports efforts that reflect environmental sustainability.
- B.7 The school complies with all diocesan canons regarding schools as well as "Safe Church, Safe Communities" training.

## C. GOVERNANCE

- C.1 There is provision in the school's by-laws for a board of trustees, who are elected or appointed according to clearly established guidelines that advance the school's mission and vision.
- C.2 The board's membership, committee structure, policies, and practices support the school's long-term viability and goals.
- C.3 The by-laws indicate that the vestry/diocese has empowered the board to be the governing body of the school.
- C.4 The size and composition of the board reflects the expertise and diversity needed to achieve the mission, vision, and strategic goals of the school.
- C.5 The board assumes responsibility for mitigating risk to the school, be it strategic, operational, financial, or legal.
- C.6 Policies are written and in place to protect the school and its employees, provide for best practice in matters of finance and governance, and plan for the future.
- C.7 The board employs the head of school as its sole employee, delegates the operational functions of the school to the head of school, and respects the boundaries that separate board governance and administrative management.

## **D. ORGANIZATION & ADMINISTRATION**

- D.1 The school's personnel policies and operations are in compliance with applicable local, county/parish, diocesan, state, and federal laws and regulations.
- D.2 In keeping with its mission and culture, the school's employment and admissions policies and practices reflect the Episcopal tradition of respect for the dignity of every human being. The school promotes an equitable, just, and inclusive community, and its policies and practices reflect accordingly. Unlawful discrimination has no place in SAES schools. The school adopts and publishes a non-discrimination policy consistent with IRS guidelines.
- D.3 The school makes full, accurate, and truthful disclosure of its mission, expectations, programs, and practices with policies and procedures that outline roles, responsibilities, code of conduct, operational functions, financial management systems, and admissions policies.
- D.4 There is an annual review of school organization, curriculum, administration, instructional facilities, and the determination of short- and long-range needs.
- D.5 The head of school employs all faculty, staff, and support personnel, and is responsible for overseeing annual performance evaluations.
- D.6 There are sufficient administrative staff with the education and experience for their assigned duties to fulfill all essential management functions.
- D.7 The administration creates protocols for addressing extended school closures caused by natural disasters, major facility emergencies, or other exceptional interruptions of instruction. The policies address attendance, alternative or resumption of instruction, obligations to employees and communications with constituents.
- D.8 The school has policies for the retention, protection, and eventual destruction of personnel, student, graduate, financial, fundraising, and medical records.
- D.9 All school records reflect compliance with applicable local, county/parish, state, and federal guidelines and codes, and are backed up both on-site and off-site.
- D.10 Admission policies and procedures are clearly defined, transparent, and consistent with the stated mission of the school. These policies and procedures reflect the school's efforts to enroll students most likely to benefit from its program. If the school enrolls international, non-immigrant students, the school is a SEVIS (Student Exchange and Visitor Immigration Service) certified school.
- D.11 The school has clearly defined internal and external development goals, which are reported to the board of trustees and the school community.
- D.12 The parents' organization is open to all parents and works with the school administration to ensure parent activities are in keeping with the overall mission and program.
- D.13 The school has risk management practices, policies and procedures to safeguard against human, physical, and financial losses.

## **E. TEACHING & LEARNING**

- E.1 The instructional program and its structure is developed from the school's stated mission, purposes, and objectives that reflect the educational goals and all aspects of operational procedures of the school.
- E.2 The school program is in compliance with the laws of the state in which the school is located.
- E.3 In all aspects of student life (including early childhood, summer, residential, homestay, extended care, e-learning, etc.) consideration for the age-appropriate intellectual, social, physical, aesthetic, emotional, ethical, and spiritual development of students is systematically addressed.
- E.4 The school provides evidence that it is engaged in ongoing review, evaluation, and development of its educational program, using data to assess, report, and monitor individual and collective student progress; and shows evidence of using the assembled data to make program adjustments and sustainable decisions.
- E.5 The school demonstrates that its program, practices, and institutional culture are informed by relevant research regarding how students learn, and the knowledge and capacities they will need in the future.

- E.6 All administrators, faculty and staff are qualified for their positions and responsibilities by education and experience, and engage in ongoing professional development. Teachers of children up to and including age 3 hold 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 have no less than a baccalaureate degree (BA/BS/BFA, etc.) in an appropriate field. Assistants and extended care staff are not required to hold college degrees but have other child-care related experiences.
- E.7 The faculty is provided with adequate time, materials, resources, technology, and ongoing professional development to support the mission and programs of the school.
- E.8 The school's remote, online, e-learning and/or blended learning offerings are integrated into the school's overall program, and provide high-quality, rigorous, and mission appropriate learning opportunities for students.

## **F. FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY**

- F.1 The school employs sound financial planning and management policies and procedures with appropriate board of trustees' oversight. The school has a long-range (multi-year) financial plan based on data-driven projections that clearly support the mission and the strategic objectives of the school.
- F.2 All revenues generated by the school or in the name of the school, including related associations and other groups using the school's name, are owned or governed by the school, and are included in the accounting and financial reports of the school.
- F.3 Every year, the school's Board of Trustees engages an independent certified public accounting firm to perform an audit with an accompanying management letter. A school with an annual revenue of less than \$1,000,000 may alternate annually between an audit and a review.
- F.4 Revenues and expenses of the school support the school's mission, and are in compliance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) and managed according to state and federal regulations governing such transactions. In addition, the school has written policies that place appropriate controls over standard business practices, including but not limited to gift acceptance, endowment and investment management, purchasing and personnel.
- F.5 Reasonable and realistic financial plans are in place to maintain adequate school facilities and programs, and to meet the current and future obligations of operational budgets and debt.

## **G. FACILITIES, SAFETY & SECURITY**

- G.1 The school maintains the facilities and campus in a manner that complies with applicable municipal, county/parish, state, and federal health and safety codes and regulations.
- G.2 The school maintains, or has available for its use, physical facilities and campus adequate to support the needs of the program.
- G.3 If the school provides programs that operate outside of the instructional day or instructional year, either on-campus or off-campus, they comply with local, county/parish, state, and federal codes, licensing and inspections, and have in place adequate insurance coverages and safety protocols.
- G.4 In the event of a crisis, the school has procedures in place to implement the requirements of any local, county/parish, state, or national mandate.
- G.5 The school demonstrates a commitment to the safety of all students and employees through its policies, procedures, and protocols.
- G.6 The school has made reasonable efforts and uses appropriate material resources to control access to the campus, and to maintain situational awareness and appropriate supervision of the full campus facilities.
- G.7 The School has established and regularly reviews general protocols for safety and security, including but not limited to student safeguarding; child abuse prevention; and recognition, intervention and mandated reporting of abuse and neglect.

## **H. HEALTH & WELL-BEING**

- H.1 The School provides age-appropriate instruction in personal health and wellness.
- H.2 The School articulates and communicates age-appropriate policies and practices for healthy relationships and personal interactions.
- H.3 The school implements programs, training, and education to promote the physical, mental, and emotional health and well-being of its students and employees.

*The mission of the Southwestern Association of Episcopal Schools is to lead, to nurture, and to unify Episcopal schools in order to advance educational excellence within the faith community of the Episcopal Church.*