



Standards of the Association (v.6.19)

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.

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. 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, teaching, operations and governance. The Standards are arranged by section:

- A. Mission
- B. Episcopal Identity, School Climate & Culture
- C. Governance
- D. Organization & Administration
- E. Teaching and Learning
- F. Fiscal Responsibility
- G. Facilities & Safety

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, SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

- B.1. The Episcopal Identity of the school shall be expressed within its mission and governance structure, school organization, and operations.
- B.2. Episcopal Identity shall be evident in the spiritual, intellectual, and socio-emotional development of all students.
- B.3. The program shall reflect 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 shall provide opportunities for student participation in meaningful programs of service to others with respect for the dignity of every human being.
- B.5. The school shall interact with the community in which it resides, including the parish (if applicable) and the diocese in which it is located.

C. GOVERNANCE

- C.1. There shall be a provision in the school's by-laws for a board of trustees, which shall be elected or appointed according to clearly established guidelines that advance the school's mission and vision. The board's membership, structure, policies, and practices shall support the school's long-term viability and goals.
- C.2. The by-laws shall indicate that the vestry/diocese has empowered the board to be the governing body of the school.
- C.3. The size and composition of the board shall reflect the expertise and diversity needed to achieve the mission, vision, and strategic goals of the school.
- C.4. The board shall assume responsibility for mitigating risk to the school, be it strategic, operational, financial, or legal.
- C.5. The school shall have policies that include but are not limited to:
- a. whistleblower
 - b. conflict of interest
 - c. grievance/conflict resolution
 - d. confidentiality that all trustees sign annually
 - e. anti-bullying/anti-hazing
 - f. anti harassment that includes sexual misconduct/sexual assault
 - g. the location and accessibility of essential records in the event of the permanent closure of the school
 - h. records retention and destruction policy
 - i. gift acceptance policy
 - j. investment and spending (if endowment fund exists) and minutes of recent board meetings pertaining to the endowment
- C.6. The board shall employ the head of school as its sole employee, delegate the operational functions of the school to the head of school, and respect the boundaries that separate board governance and administrative management.

D. ORGANIZATION AND 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 shall reflect accordingly. Unlawful discrimination has no place in SAES schools. The school must adopt and publish a non-discrimination policy consistent with IRS guidelines.

- D.3. The administration shall create written policies and procedures that outline roles, responsibilities, code of conduct, operational functions, financial management systems, admissions policies. There shall be clear, written procedures for an annual review of school organization, curriculum, administration, instructional facilities, and the determination of short- and long-range needs. . The school makes full, accurate and truthful disclosure of its mission, policies, expectations, programs, and practices.
- D.4. The head of school shall employ all faculty, staff and support personnel, and shall be responsible for overseeing annual performance evaluations. There shall be sufficient administrative staff with the education and experience for their assigned duties to fulfill all essential management functions.
- D.5. The administration shall create protocols for addressing extended school closures caused by natural disasters, major facility emergencies, or other exceptional interruptions of instruction. The policies shall address attendance, alternative or resumption of instruction, obligations to employees and communications with constituents.
- D.6. The school shall have a policy for the retention and destruction of personnel, student, graduate, financial (including fundraising) and medical records, as well as policies on securing these records against loss, identity theft, or fire/water damage, with access limited to authorized individuals. These records shall comply with applicable local, county/parish, state, and federal guidelines and codes, and be backed up both on-site and off-site.
- D.7. Admission policies and procedures shall be clearly defined, transparent, and consistent with the stated mission of the school. These policies and procedures shall reflect the school's efforts to enroll students most likely to benefit from its program. If the school, either day, homestay, or boarding, enrolls international, non-immigrant students, the school shall be a SEVIS (Student Exchange and Visitor Immigration Service) certified school.
- D.8. The school has clearly defined internal and external development goals, which are reported to the board of trustees and school community.
- D.9. The parents' organization shall be open to all parents and shall work with the school administration to assure that parent activities are in keeping with the overall mission and program.

E. TEACHING & LEARNING

- E.1. The instructional program and its structure shall be developed from the school's stated mission, purposes, and objectives that reflect the educational goals and operational procedures of the school.
- E.2. The school program shall be 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, 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 shall be qualified for their positions and responsibilities by education and experience, and shall engage in ongoing professional development. Teachers of children up to and including age 3 shall 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 shall 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 should have other child-care related experiences.
- E.7. The school's personnel policies and operations are in compliance with applicable local, county/parish, diocesan, state, and federal laws and regulations.
- E.8. The faculty is provided with adequate time, materials/resources, including technology, to develop and implement the curriculum.

F. FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

- F.1. The school shall employ sound financial planning and management policies and procedures with appropriate board of trustees' oversight. The school should develop 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. The school's Board of Trustees will engage on an annual basis an independent certified public accounting firm to perform an audit with an accompanying management letter. Once the school has had an audit, a school may exercise the option of alternating audits and reviews, provided there are no more than two reviews between audits. However, a school with total budgetary revenues of \$500,000 or less may exercise the option of an annual review produced by an independent certified public accounting firm.

- F.3. **(Beginning 2020-2021)** Every Year, the school's Board of Trustees will engage 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 must support the school's mission, and be in compliance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) and managed according to state and federal regulations governing such transactions. In addition, the school must have written policies that place appropriate controls over standard business practices, including but not limited to gift acceptance, endowment and investment management, purchasing and personnel policies.
- F.5. Reasonable and realistic financial plans must be in place to maintain adequate school facilities and programs, and to meet the current and future obligations of operational budgets and debt.
- F.6. The school shall have a risk management plan, supported by appropriate levels of insurance, to safeguard against human, physical, and financial losses.

G. FACILITIES AND SAFETY

- G.1. The school shall maintain facilities and campus in a manner that complies with applicable municipality, county/parish, state, and federal health and safety codes and regulations.
- G.2. The school shall maintain, or have available for its use, physical facilities and campus adequate to support the needs of the program.
- G.3. The school shall maintain appropriate policies and implement relevant programs and training to assure the physical and emotional safety and well-being of its students, employees, and the general school community.
- G.4. If the school provides programs that operate outside of the instructional day or instructional year, either on-campus or off-campus, they shall comply with local, county/parish, state, and federal codes, licensing, and inspections, and have in place adequate insurance coverages and safety protocols.
- G.5. In the event of a crisis, the school shall have procedures in place to implement the requirements of any local, county/parish, state, or national mandate.

Southwestern Association of Episcopal Schools

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