**Why Accreditation?**

* Certification to the public that the school is a trustworthy institution of learning
* Validates the integrity of a school’s program and student transcripts
* Fosters improvement of the school’s programs and operations to support student learning
* Assures a school community that the school’s purposes are appropriate and being accomplished through a viable educational program
* A way to manage change through regular assessment, planning, implementing, monitoring and reassessment
* Assists a school/district in establishing its priority areas for improvement as a result of the perpetual accreditation cycle that includes
	+ School self-assessment of the current educational program for students
	+ Insight and perspective from the visiting committee
	+ Regular school staff assessment of progress through the intervening years between full self-studies.

This is the agency that provides the accreditation to schools, based on a rigorous evaluation process that gives validity to student records and diplomas.

The Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC), a 501(c)(3) organization, is recognized as one of six regional associations that accredit public and private schools, colleges, and universities in the United States.

**EVALUATION:** Each school is evaluated on the basis of the WASC criteria and the appropriateness of the school’s stated purpose, school wide student goals and the degree to which it accomplishes these.

**WHAT IS ACCREDITATION?**Accreditation is a voluntary dual-purpose process that schools (1) must be worthy of the trust placed in them to provide high-quality learning opportunities and (2) clearly demonstrate continual self-improvement.

An accredited school is focused on a mission and goals for students; it is student-oriented and examines its students' performance continuously; it accepts objective evaluation from a team of outside peer professionals trained by WASC; it maintains a qualified faculty within an effectively organized school; it collaboratively assesses the quality of its educational programs on a regular basis; and it plans for the future.

**PROCESS:** The full accreditation process has three stages: the self-study, the visit, and the follow-up. A school’s philosophy and the WASC criteria serve as the underlying bases for these stages.

 **WASC PHILOSOPHY**

The Commission grants accreditation to a school based upon the following:

The presumption that the primary goals of accreditation are

* certification to the public that the school is a trustworthy institution of learning
* The improvement of the school’s programs and operations to support student learning.

The school’s self-study and the visiting committee’s report provides compelling evidence that

* the school is substantially accomplishing its stated purposes and functions identified as appropriate for an institution of its type
* The school is meeting an acceptable level of quality in accordance with the WASC criteria adopted by the Accrediting Commission.

**WASC MISSION**

The mission of the Commission is to foster excellence in elementary, secondary, adult, and postsecondary education by encouraging school improvement through a process of continuing evaluation and to recognize, by accreditation, schools that meet an acceptable level of quality, in accordance with established criteria.