



COUNCIL ON EDUCATIONAL  
STANDARDS & ACCOUNTABILITY

## THE CESA INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW

---

*The purpose of the Institutional Review is to gain a perspective on the institution and where it performs in relation to best practices nationally for Christian schools. The goal of CESA is to have high-performing Christian institutions delivering the best education to students across the country.*

- The school will set up an Institutional Review Visit with the Institutional Review Director, Jim Marsh.  
*\*\*Note: The CESA Institutional Review may be scheduled to coordinate with an accreditation process of another accrediting organization, if appropriate.*
- The Institutional Review Visit will include a team of four individuals. The team will be composed of the Institutional Review Director and/or the Executive Director of CESA, 1 or 2 heads of school, as well as an expert in independent school academics. The Institutional Review Visit will give an opportunity for the school to better understand the main areas of success as well as improvement, hopefully resulting in membership of CESA.

## THE INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW VISIT

---

- The Institutional Review Visit generally begins on a Sunday night with dinner and concludes mid-morning on Tuesday.
- The school will provide a hotel relatively close to the school that will house the Team during the visit.
- The Institutional Review Team will provide their own transportation to/from the school.
- The Institutional Review Team will make their travel arrangements and request reimbursement after the visit.
- The visit begins with a dinner meeting with the head of school and a representative group of board members (all board members are welcome to attend).
- Monday morning will begin with a tour of the school by the head of school and then a 30-minute meeting.
- The school will then establish a schedule for the Team that includes 45-minute meetings with the following school constituents on Monday morning:
  - Leadership team
  - Representative group of faculty members (4-10 established and new faculty).
  - Chief academic officers (e.g., division heads, academic dean, dean of students, etc.)

- Chief operations/business officer and team, and board members that are members of the finance committee.
- Development, Admissions, and Marketing Team.
- Representative group of middle and upper school students (could be over lunch).
- Monday afternoon will be left open for classroom visits and additional needed meetings.
- Tuesday morning will include working time for the team as well as any additional meetings that might be needed. The team will conclude with a meeting with the Head of School on Tuesday afternoon.
- When the team visits the school the following items should be provided for review:
  - Standard One
    - Board Chair Letter
    - Recommendation letters from CESA member schools
    - Faculty Handbook
    - Family Handbooks
  - Standard Two
    - School by-laws
    - Board by-laws
    - Accreditation reports
    - List of board members
    - Board induction/orientation program
    - Any board handbooks
    - Strategic plans
    - Evaluation forms for head of school, admin team, and faculty
    - Organization chart
  - Standard Three
    - School budget
    - Financial audits
    - Job descriptions
    - Crisis management plan (or safety and security plan)
    - Any advancement/development literature
    - Enrollment/marketing plan
    - Technology plan
  - Standard Four
    - Testing reports
    - Curriculum guides
    - Student evaluation forms used for faculty in grades 8-12
    - Tool and results for faculty culture assessment
    - Tools used for faculty development and evaluation
    - Professional development calendar
    - List of professional development activities and conferences attended by faculty in past and present school year. Please list the conference, the individual's name who attended, and their position.
    - New faculty orientation plan/schedule
    - Mentoring plan
    - Graduation requirements
  - Standard Five: Sense of Coherent Christian Community
    - Communications plan

- The Team will meet at a local restaurant on Monday night by themselves to discuss the focus group meetings and begin formulating the Institutional Review report.
- The Team might visit the school on Tuesday morning to meet with additional personnel missed on Monday or follow up with individuals, as needed.
- The Institutional Review Team will meet with the head of school mid-morning on Tuesday to present an oral report regarding the findings of the visit.
- The team must meet all primary standards and either “Meet” or “Exceed” expectations in the secondary standards.
  - **Overall Rating Categories:** Each section (Standard One, Standard Two, etc.) will received an overall rating according to the following system:
    - *Exceeds* - Meets all primary standards and 70% of secondary standards.
    - *Pursues* - Meets all primary standards and less than 50% of secondary standards. Does not qualify for member of council. Can reapply for membership when school feels it has met standards.
  - **Primary Standards:** Within each section there are major standards that CESA views as important to membership in the organization. If an institution feels they are not able to meet one of the primary standards, please contact the Institutional Review Director or Executive Director for guidance. We realize schools are in various phases of development and it is important to view each institution individually and according to its strategic goals. Primary standards will be rated by only two categories: Meets (M) or Does Not Meet (DNM).
  - **Secondary Standard Ratings:** Secondary standards will be rated according to the following three categories: Meets standard (M), In Progress (IP), or Does Not Meet (DNM) standard.
- Following the CESA Institutional Review Visit the school will receive a written report by the Institutional Review Team outlining their findings during the school visit.
- Within 60 days following the Institutional Review, the school will submit its final documentation in the form of a Standards Achievement Plan (SAP), coordinated to its own strategic plan. The plan will include timelines and tactics that the school will employ toward achievement of its goals as established by the SAP. Each indicator noted as in need of growth will include annual benchmarks to which the Institutional Review Team will refer in the context of membership renewal.
- Upon completion of the SAP, the Board of Directors, in conjunction with the Institutional Review Team assigned to the school applying for membership, will determine if the school has satisfactorily passed the Institutional Review and determine if they are certified as a CESA Member School.

**Note:**

- The certification process is meant to be a rigorous process that helps schools improve throughout the completion of the process and develop long-range initiatives for continual improvement.
- The certification process is meant to stretch even the best schools so that they may not be satisfied with the status quo.
- The certification process is on-going as schools must seek re-certification every seventh year.
- A CESA certification signifies the school receiving full membership status has completed a rigorous course of action, and is also committed to ongoing growth and development.

## ***Sample Schedule***

### ***Sunday Night***

---

4:00 pm - CESA Institutional Review Team meeting at the team hotel

6:00 pm – Board Dinner at a local restaurant. Dinner followed by a meeting time with the board.

### ***Monday***

---

8:00-10:00 am - Meeting and Campus Tour with the Head of School

Followed by the following meetings during the day (1 hour with each group):

- Academic Team
- Division Heads
- Directors of Development, Admissions, and Communications
- Director of Business and Finance with or without the Finance Committee of the Board
- Parents – 8-10 parents from various grade levels, lengths of tenure at school, etc.
- Group of faculty members – 8-10 faculty members from various grade levels, lengths of tenure at school, etc.

Lunch with various students in 8<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade totaling around 8-10 students comprised of at least one:

- Minority student
- New student
- “Average” student
- Student Government representative
- Student involved in fine arts
- Other students representing areas that make the school distinctive

6:30-8:30 CESA Review Team dinner and meeting at a local restaurant on own

### ***Tuesday***

---

9:00 – 10:00 am – Leadership team meeting

10:00 - 11:00 am – CESA team meeting to prepare report

11:00 am – Review with the Head of School

***Please note that the Executive Director, Brian Kennerly, would be willing to have a follow-up meeting or conversation with the head of school and administrative team in order to support the school in its improvement. This meeting has proved beneficial in setting up the initial School Achievement Plan or as a follow-up 6 months to a year after the SAP is developed in providing advice to the school for continual school improvement in relation to its SAP.***