

Texas Private School Accreditation Commission

The Texas Private School Accreditation Commission is composed of professional private school associations concerned with, and supportive of, educational standards of excellence for all children. The Commission's special mission is to validate the accreditation programs of its member associations.

Texas Private School Accreditation Commission
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Purpose

Texas private school leaders organized the Texas Private School Accreditation Commission (TEPSAC) to serve in an advisory capacity to the Texas Commissioner of Education. The Commissioner has recognized TEPSAC and all of the associations it has approved for purposes of accreditation of Texas non-public schools. The Texas Education Agency has not engaged in the accreditation of non-public schools since June 1, 1989. For the Commissioner to recognize the accreditation of a non-public school, its operations, curriculum, staffing, and instruction must be sufficiently comparable to those of the public schools to justify the recognition. In 1987, TEPSAC established criteria, standards, reporting, and appeals procedures to accomplish an accreditation process comparable to that administered by the Agency for public schools.

It must be understood that “for the Commissioner to recognize the accreditation of a non-public school, its operations, curriculum, staffing, and instruction must be sufficiently comparable to those of the public schools” **does not mean** that accredited non-public schools have to surrender their unique qualities or operate and teach exactly as do the public schools.

MEMBER ASSOCIATION STANDARDS FOR SCHOOL ACCREDITATION

A primary purpose of any association recognized by TEPSAC is to accredit schools. Through this accreditation of schools, the TEPSAC association assures the public and Commissioner of Education that the accredited school meets the association's standards.

Because the non-public schools of the State differ widely in mission, structure, funding, and operation, no prescribed set of standards can be applied to all schools. However, the standards must be comparable with the State Board of Education's standards for public schools in terms of the applicable quality indicators. Each association will submit its Standards for Accreditation to the Commissioners for review.

Each association will provide standards for its member elementary and secondary schools that address the following areas:

A. Philosophy and Objectives

The school shall have a clearly stated philosophy with objectives that are adequate to implement the philosophy.

B. Organization, Governance, and Finance

The school shall be a legal entity with adequate financial resources and demonstrated professional management of its resources.

C. Plant and Facilities

The plant and facilities shall be adequate to support the program of the school. The school must comply with applicable state, county, and municipal health, fire, safety, and sanitation codes.

D. Program

The program of the school shall be designed in the best interests of the students, and students are admitted only when it has been determined that there are reasonable expectations that the student's best interests can be served. The program, while appropriately adjusted to serve the best interests of its students and to be consistent with the school's philosophy and objectives, complies with applicable rules of the State Board of Education, especially in the following areas:

1. Length of the school day and school year.
2. Teacher planning and preparation time.
3. The basic skills subjects in the elementary curriculum, including subjects which constitute a well-balanced elementary curriculum and instructional time requirements which are comparable to those required in the like subjects at equivalent grade levels

in the public school system, maintenance of student academic records, and achievement levels required for promotion.

4. The appropriate subjects in the secondary curriculum, including sequencing of courses for which graduation credit may be sought from the state which are comparable to those required in the like subjects and courses at equivalent grade levels by the state, maintenance of student academic records, and achievement levels necessary for the awarding of credits and diplomas.

E. Administration and Staffing

Professional staff members hold degrees and are qualified by preparation or experience for positions they hold and for the work to which they are assigned.

TEXAS PRIVATE SCHOOL ACCREDITATION COMMISSION BY-LAWS

Article I. Name

The name of the organization shall be Texas Private School Accreditation Commission (TEPSAC).

Article II. Purpose

It shall be the purpose of TEPSAC:

- A. To approve accrediting associations, which meet the requirements established by TEPSAC for accrediting schools offering preschool through 12th grade in the State of Texas.
- B. To assist associations in developing acceptable and educationally sound standards for accreditation.
- C. To serve as advisor to the Texas Education Agency in determining educational quality in the nonpublic schools in the state.
- D. To assist all nonpublic schools accredited by TEPSAC-approved associations in obtaining the following services and recognition:
 - 1. Transfer of student credits to Texas public schools.
 - 2. Creditable teacher service for salary purposes.
 - 3. Information from the Texas Commissioner of Education.
 - 4. Use of the Regional Education Service Centers.
 - 5. Listing in the web based, online Texas School Directory.
 - 6. Acceptance of graduates into colleges and universities which stipulate graduation from an accredited high school.
 - 7. Approval as a school site for field-based teacher certification requirements.

Article III. Membership

The membership shall be comprised of associations that have been approved by TEPSAC and submitted to the Commissioner of Education for recognition. An association is a member in good standing as long as it meets the responsibilities listed in the Criteria for Approving Accrediting Associations as stipulated in the TEPSAC manual.

Article IV. Governance

Section 1. Eligibility and Appointment of Commissioners

- 1. The governing board shall be composed of a representative/commissioner from each member association.

2. An association shall appoint a representative/commissioner from its administrative/decision-making body who is competent and knowledgeable in the accreditation process.
3. The Commission shall include a representative/liaison appointed by the Texas Commissioner of Education.
4. An approved association may change its representative by giving written notice to the Chair of TEPSAC.
5. A commissioner may be removed from office for just cause by the unanimous vote of the remaining commissioners. Just cause shall include, but not necessarily be limited to, two consecutive unexcused absences from regularly scheduled meetings or failure to discharge fully his/her duties or responsibilities. In the event a commissioner has been removed from office, the recognized association shall be requested to appoint a new representative.

Section 2. Officers and Executive Committee

The following officers shall be nominated and elected for a two-year term at the spring meeting.

1. The Chair shall:
 - a. Preside over meetings
 - b. Appoint committees as necessary.
 - c. Disseminate to commissioners educational information from the State Board of Education, Texas Education Agency, and the Texas Legislature.
 - d. Make certain that official records are kept concerning the approval procedure and continued compliance with all criteria by each member.
2. The Vice Chair shall preside in the absence of the Chair.
3. The Secretary/Treasurer shall:
 - a. Keep a record of all the proceedings of the Commission;
 - b. Shall maintain such books as are necessary and comply with the established audit or review policy as directed by the Commission
4. The elected officers and the immediate past-Chair shall constitute the Executive Committee.

Article V. Commission Meetings

Section 1. The Semi-annual meetings shall be in the second and third quarters of each calendar year.

Section 2. At the Semi-annual meetings, the Chair shall present for approval all regularly scheduled meetings for the next year.

Section 3. The Chair may call a special meeting, providing he/she has polled the commissioners to be assured a quorum will be in attendance.

Section 4. Each commissioner shall have one vote. No substitute voting or voting by proxy shall be permitted. (Exceptions: Article VI, Section 4.)

Section 5. A quorum is necessary for conducting any business at a stated or called meeting. A quorum is established when three-fourths of the membership is present.

Section 6. Business shall be conducted by the Robert's Rules of Order, which may be modified as needed.

Article VI. Amendments to By-Laws

Section 1. These by-laws may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the Commission.

Section 2. Proposed changes in the by-laws and the rationale for each change must be submitted in writing to the Chair and signed by the sponsoring commissioner.

Section 3. The Chair must mail the proposed amendment change to all commissioners thirty (30) days prior to the meeting. Appropriate wording in the minutes of the previous meeting shall also constitute due notice.

Section 4. In the event a commissioner cannot attend the meeting, a written proxy shall be accepted when voting for an amendment change, when voting pro or con for acceptance of an organization, or when voting on other important issues which may affect commission members, providing the proxy is delivered before or at the meeting.

POLICY BOOK

FUNCTIONS, PROCEDURES AND ORGANIZATION

The Function and Purpose of the Commission

In 1986 the State Department of Education made the decision to discontinue the accreditation of private/nonpublic schools. Concurrently, in collaboration with the Commissioner of Education and staff, Texas private school leaders organized the Texas Private School Accreditation Commission (TEPSAC) to serve in an advisory capacity with the Commissioner of Education. In 1987, TEPSAC established criteria, standards, reporting, and appeals procedures to establish an accountability process of accreditation comparable to that of the public schools without compromising the private schools' unique qualities or surrendering their right to operate individually and within context of their own educational policies.

The Texas Private School Accreditation Commission serves in an advisory capacity to the Commissioner of Education. It evaluates the capacity of the Texas nonpublic school associations for assessing and making judgments about educational quality. If TEPSAC recommends recognition of an association to the Commissioner and if that recommendation is accepted, schools accredited by that association will be deemed accredited schools by the Commissioner of Education and will be so listed in the Texas School Directory that is updated annually by the Texas Education Agency.

Procedures for becoming a TEPSAC member

An association, which has as its purpose the accrediting of member schools, may apply to the Commission for affiliation as a Candidate for Approval. An association must have performed as an accrediting agency for at least three years before it can be considered for candidacy status.

The evaluation of an association's performance with respect to the published criteria will be based on the association's own self-description, a visit to the association by a commissioner, an observation of one of the association's on-site visits, and a written report to the Commission. That report will include comments on comparability of the association's standards with the State Board of Education's accreditation standards.

Organization

Each association that has been approved by TEPSAC and recognized by the Commissioner of Education appoints one commissioner to the Commission.

Meetings and Funding

The commissioners will meet at least twice a year. The Chair will receive applications, notify organizations of decisions made by the Commission, and report to constituent groups, the State Board of Education, and the Commissioner of Education as necessary.

The annual dues, required of each member association, shall be set by the commissioners and are payable on or before July 1 of each year. Dues may be paid on a semi-annual schedule if an association cannot pay dues in one payment.

Process

1.0.0 Approval Process

1.0.1 Evaluation of Established Procedures

The evaluation of an association's performance with respect to the published criteria will be based on the association's own self-description and a visit by a commissioner to an accrediting association's most appropriate office where the records are kept that are most germane to TEPSAC. There should also be an observation of one of the association's on-site visits (Visits can be made in other states if a Texas school is not available provided the standards and procedures being used for the visit are the same as would be used for a Texas school), a visit to one association meeting where accreditation is dealt with, and a written report to the Commission. The report assures the public and commissioner of education that the accrediting association meets the TEPSAC standards.

1.0.2 Annual Report

Each association will submit an annual report to the commission at its September meeting, consisting of a roster of accredited schools; a summary of accreditation activity during the year; a list of significant changes in procedures, standards and operation; an update of programs and problems (workshops and team training); a current list of the officers and/or governing board; and other information deemed appropriate. When the association submits the annual report, this will be done in writing and orally. The association will be open to answering questions by the TEPSAC association.

1.0.3 Re-evaluation/Approval

An association, at the end of each 10-year cycle, will undergo re-evaluation. The designated commissioner shall review the association's published criteria and procedures, observe an on-site accreditation visit and submit a recommendation and report.

2.0.0 Complaints

Written and signed complaints about an association will be reviewed by the coordinator and Chair of TEPSAC after the complainant has demonstrated sufficient attempt to resolve the complaint at the school level. The complaint should be communicated to the association with a written response requested. After reviewing the response, a decision would be made as to the need for further investigation. Further investigation would constitute a committee formed by the Chair.

3.0.0 TEPSAC Meetings

The meetings will generally be held on the third Wednesday of September and the third Wednesday of April.

4.0.0 Commissioner's Visitation

A TEPSAC commissioner, for his own interest, may observe any accreditation related visit conducted by a member association. The association to be observed should receive notice of the commissioner's intent to do so. The costs associated with the observation should be borne by the commissioner.

5.0.0 Budget/Finance

5.0.1 The annual budget will be developed under the direction of the Treasurer and approved by the Commission.

5.0.2 Each member association is responsible for the expenses of its representative to the commission.

5.0.3 The annual fee is due and payable on July 1, but may be paid in two equal payments on July 1 and January 1. A late charge of ten percent will be charged when payment is more than thirty days late.

5.0.4 When commissioners travel on behalf of TEPSAC and approval is given by the Chair, TEPSAC is responsible for the expenses.

5.0.5 The TEPSAC checking account requires only one signature. Signatories are named by the Chair.

5.0.6 The membership application fee is posted on the "Application to Petition for Admission."

6.0.0 Election Procedures

6.0.1 The Vice-Chair, the Chair-elect, and all officers will remain in office two years.

6.0.2 An appropriate gift of appreciation will be presented to each outgoing Chair.

7.0.0 TEPSAC Brochures

Brochures will be printed once a year. If an association wishes to have more copies of the brochure than supplied by TEPSAC, that association may, at its own expense, reprint the brochure.

8.0.0 **Staff**

TEPSAC shall employ a person to provide support services as deemed necessary by the Commission. The expenses of maintaining an office shall be paid by the Commission according to the budget prepared by the Treasurer and approved by the Commission.

9.0.0 **Association Standards**

An association seeking TEPSAC's recommendation to the Commissioner of Education for recognition shall have performed as an accrediting agency for at least three years.

10.0.0 **Qualifications of Commissioners**

Each association recognized by the Commissioner of Education on TEPSAC's recommendation shall be entitled to have a representative serve as a TEPSAC Commissioner. This Commissioner should be empowered to speak for the association being represented. During the time an association is a candidate for recognition, its representative may attend commission meetings but will have no vote. When the representative's association is under discussion, the representative will be excused.

CRITERIA FOR APPROVING ACCREDITING ASSOCIATIONS

A. Functional Aspects

An association's functional aspects will be demonstrated by:

1. Its scope of operations:
 - a. The association accredits schools in the State of Texas.
 - b. The association clearly defines in its charter, by-laws, or accrediting standards, the scope of its activities, including the types and levels of institutions covered.
2. Its organization:
 - a. The association has the administrative personnel and procedures to carry out its mission in a timely and effective manner.
 - b. The association defines its fiscal needs, manages its expenditures, and has adequate financial resources to carry out its operations as shown by an audit or compilation for the most recent fiscal year.
 - c. The association's fees, if any, for the accreditation process do not exceed the reasonable cost of sustaining and improving the process.
 - d. The association uses competent and knowledgeable persons, qualified by training and experience, and selects such persons in accordance with non-discriminatory practices:
 - i.) To participate on visiting teams
 - ii.) To engage in consultative services for the evaluation and accreditation process
 - iii.) To serve on policy and decision-making bodies
 - e. The association includes on each visiting team at least one person who is not a member of its policy or decision-making body or its administrative staff.
 - f. The association has in place policies to guard against conflict of interests by governing board members and/or visiting team members. No team member should benefit financially from participation in association activities.

3. Its procedures:
 - a. The association maintains clear definitions of each accreditation level or status and has clearly written procedures for granting, denying, re-evaluating, revoking, and reinstating such accredited statuses.
 - b. If the association develops a pre-accreditation status, the criteria and procedures applying to pre-accreditation must be appropriately related to the criteria and procedures for accreditation.
 - c. The association requires, as an integral part of its accrediting process, both a school self-study and an on-site review by a visiting team.
 - i.) The self-study shall be a qualitative assessment of the strengths and limitations of the school, including achievement of objectives and compliance with applicable rules of the State Board of Education. A representative portion of the school's governing body, administrative staff, teaching faculty, students, and other appropriate constituencies should participate in the self-study.
 - ii.) The association provides written and consultative guidance to the school and the visiting team.

B. Responsibility

An association's responsibility will be demonstrated by the way in which:

1. Its accreditation serves clearly identified needs, as follows:
 - a. The association's accreditation program takes into account the rights, responsibilities and interests of students, families, schools, and the communities they serve.
 - b. The association's purposes and objectives are clearly defined in its charter, by-laws, or accrediting standards.
2. The association is responsible to the public interest in that:
 - a. It publishes or otherwise makes publicly available:
 - i.) The standards by which schools are evaluated
 - ii.) The procedures utilized in arriving at decisions regarding the accreditation status of a school
 - iii.) The current accreditation status of schools and the date of the next scheduled review or reconsideration of accreditation
 - iv.) The names and affiliations of members of its policy and decision-making bodies, and the names of its principle administrative personnel, and

- v.) A description of the governance and type of legal organization of the association
 - b. The association provides advance notice of proposed or revised standards to all schools affected by its accreditation process, and provides such schools adequate opportunity to comment on such standards prior to their adoption.
 - c. The association has written procedures for the review of complaints pertaining to school quality, as these relate to the association's standards, and demonstrates that such procedures are adequate to provide timely treatment of such complaints in a manner that is fair and equitable to the complainant and to the school.
 - d. The association has in place a procedure pertaining to the appropriate handling of student records in the event that an accredited member school ceases to operate.
3. It assures a systematic process in its accrediting procedures, as demonstrated in part by:
- a. Affording initial evaluation of a school only when the chief executive officer of the school applies for accreditation of the school
 - b. Providing for adequate discussion during an on-site visit between the visiting team and the faculty, administrative staff, students, and other appropriate persons
 - c. Furnishing, as a result of an evaluation visit, a written report to the school commenting on areas of strengths, areas needing improvement and when appropriate, suggesting means of improvement, including specific areas, if any, where the school may not be in compliance with the association's standards; and filing a copy of the written report with the accrediting association to be made available to the TEPSAC commissioners upon request.
 - d. Providing the chief executive officer of the school with an opportunity to comment upon the written report and to file supplemental materials pertinent to the facts and conclusions in the written report of the visiting team before the accrediting association takes action on the report.
 - e. Evaluating the report of the visiting team.
 - f. Providing for the withdrawal of accreditation only for just cause, after review, or when the school does not permit re-evaluation after due notice.
 - g. Providing the chief executive officer of the school with a specific statement of reasons for any adverse accrediting action and notice of the right to appeal such action.
 - h. Establishing and implementing published rules of procedure regarding appeals which will provide for:
 - i.) No change in the accreditation status of the school pending disposition of appeal
 - ii.) The right to a hearing before the appeal body, and

- iii.) Supplying the chief executive officer of the school with a written decision of the appeal body, including a statement of specifics
4. It has demonstrated capability and willingness to foster ethical practices among the schools which it accredits, as well as nondiscriminatory practices in admissions and employment.
5. It periodically reviews and evaluates its educational standards.
6. It secures sufficient information regarding the school, which shows an ongoing program of evaluation of results consistent with the educational goals of the school and applicable state requirements.
7. It accredits only those schools that meet its published standards; demonstrates that its standards, policies and procedures are fairly applied; and demonstrates that its evaluations are conducted and decisions rendered under conditions that assure an impartial and objective judgment.
8. It reviews each school's accreditation status through periodic additional reports and/or visits. An accredited school must have an on- site accreditation visit at least once every ten years.
9. The association actively participates in the governance of the Texas Private School Accreditation Commission.

C. Credibility

1. An association's credibility is demonstrated by acceptance of its policies, evaluation methods, and decisions by educators and educational institutions.
2. To achieve credibility an association will:
 - a. Conduct regular review of its standards, policies, and procedures, in order that the evaluation process shall support constructive analysis; emphasize factors of critical importance; and address the educational needs of the students.
 - b. Involve representatives of its membership in the composition of its policy and decision-making bodies.

D. Autonomy

An association's autonomy is demonstrated by evidence that:

1. It performs no function that would be inconsistent with the formation of an independent judgment of the quality of a school.
2. Its operating procedures prevent conflicts of interest in rendering decisions.

TEPSAC Procedures Review

The TEPSAC approval process is divided into three phases for new applicant Associations.

I. Application

II. Candidacy

A. Documentation

B. Visitation

III. Commission Assessment and Decision

I. Application

- A. Upon request from an inquiring Association, a copy of the TEPSAC Manual will be sent with a letter of instruction from the Executive Director for initiating the process.
- B. The completed application will be submitted with the following items:
 - 1) Payment of the non-refundable application fee of \$800.00
 - 2) The Association's Standards for Membership (reference page)
 - 3) The Association's Operation Manual (reference page)
 - 4) A current list of schools accredited by the Association
 - 5) Copies of the Association's published descriptive material
 - a. An external audit or compilation performed by a qualified CPA
 - 6) The following statement will be displayed on the application:
 - a. Re: three-year requirement: An association must have performed as an accrediting agency for at least three years before it can be considered for candidacy status.
- C. A copy of the application and supporting documents are sent to each commissioner and the TEPSAC office.
- D. The commission reviews the application, standards, and procedures.
- E. The executive director or president of the applicant association appears before the commission for an interview to present and answer questions about the association.
- F. Following the interview, the commission votes to accept or deny the application.
- G. If the application is accepted, the applicant Association is authorized to proceed with the Candidacy phase and to prepare its Documentation of Compliance with the TEPSAC Criteria and Standards (aka "Petition").

II. Candidacy Phase

- A. A commissioner and assistant are appointed to serve as liaison to the Association. Their responsibilities include:
 - 1) Advising the Association through the documentation process, (page reference)

- 2) Visiting the Association office
 - 3) Observing an Association standards/accreditation committee meeting
 - 4) Observing a school evaluation visit
 - 5) Writing a report for the commission on the documentation that includes the checklist of compliance with criteria and standards (to be formatted), and the observation report of a school accreditation visit
- B. The applicant Association completes the full Documentation of Compliance with the TEPSAC Criteria and Standards.
- C. When Documentation is completed and accepted by the Commission Liaison, the observations of the Association office, school evaluation, and standards/accreditation committee will be conducted.
- D. The Liaison and assistant submit the report to the Commission Office and to each commissioner.

III. Commission Action

- A. The full report will be acted upon at the next Commission meeting.
- B. The Liaison will present the report and make his/her recommendation to the Commission.
- C. The Commission may decide to recognize the Association or to deny its Petition for approval. The TEPSAC Executive Director will send a report to the applicant, which includes the following:
- 1) The strengths of the Association's standards and procedures
 - 2) Any weaknesses or areas in need of improvement, each being reference to a Commission criterion, and
 - 3) Specific recommendations to address areas in need of improvement
 - 4) The report will also define the action taken by a majority vote of the Commission which may be to:
 - a. Approve the Association for a period of ten (10) years
 - b. Approve the Association for a shorter period with specific conditions which must be addressed for full-term approval, or
 - c. Deny approval with citation of the specific criteria which have not been met.
- D. Appeal
- 1) An Association may appeal an adverse decision. At least one month prior to the Commission meeting at which the appeal is to be considered, the Association must submit a written brief with documentation to substantiate its appeal.
 - 2) An Association, which has been denied approval, may reapply after one year. The Commission discourages a second application unless substantial progress can be shown to have been made correcting weaknesses.

Re-Approval of TEPSAC Recognized Accrediting Associations

Associations that are being reviewed to fulfill requirements for re-approval begin in the process with Phase II Candidacy and the Documentation of Compliance with the TEPSAC Criteria and Standards. The school visit observation may be to any one of the association's member schools (Visits can be made in other states if a Texas school is not available provided the standards and procedures being used for the visit are the same as would be used for a Texas school). In addition, the association must submit its audit or compilation for the most recent fiscal year.

Timeline

- Step 1: The applicant association must submit the documentation listed in I.B on page 16.
- Step 2: The President of TEPSAC will schedule a hearing at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the TEPSAC Commission. During this hearing, the chief operating officer of the applicant association will appear before the TEPSAC Commission to present the application and answer any questions.
- Step 3: The TEPSAC Commission may accept the application, deny the application, or table the application with a request for additional information or documentation to be presented at a future TEPSAC meeting.
- Step 4: If the application is accepted, the President of TEPSAC will appoint a Commissioner to serve as the liaison between TEPSAC and the applicant association. (See the responsibilities of the liaison in section II.A.1 on pages 16 and 17).
- Step 5: The applicant association is then authorized to proceed with the Candidacy phase and to prepare its Documentation of Compliance.
- Step 6: When the Documentation of Compliance is completed, it is submitted to the liaison for review and approval. The liaison may request edits, additional information, additional documents, and/or revisions.
- Step 7: After the Documentation is accepted by the Commission Liaison, the liaison must then visit the applicant association's headquarters offices, accompany a team on a school site visit, and attend a meeting of the applicant association's standards/accreditation committee.
- Step 8: The liaison then writes a report to submit to the TEPSAC office and to each commissioner.
- Step 9: Once all of the applicant association's documentation and the liaison report are received in the TEPSAC office, the President of TEPSAC will schedule a hearing at the next regularly scheduled TEPSAC Commission meeting. It is expected that all documentation will be submitted at least 30 days before a scheduled meeting. If documentation is received less than 30 days before a meeting, the hearing will be scheduled at the following TEPSAC Commission meeting.
- Step 10: The application will be considered at the meeting as scheduled by the President following the guidelines in section III on page 17.

It is expected that steps 4 through 8 will take one to two years with the total process (Steps 1 through 10) taking two to three years.

REMOVAL OF AN ASSOCIATION FROM COMMISSION MEMBERSHIP

An Association may be removed from Commission membership when it no longer meets its responsibilities, as delineated in the **Criteria for Approving Accrediting Associations**.

An Association must meet all Criteria continuously.

When an Association is not represented at two consecutive meetings of the Commission, it is considered not to be participating in the governance of the Commission.

When it is determined, on the basis of documented information, that an Association is not carrying out its responsibilities to the Commission, the Association shall be notified that continued membership is in jeopardy. The Commission, advised by the Association's consultant, shall vote to place the Association on notice that it is in danger of forfeiting its approved status in TEPSAC. The Commission chair shall, by certified mail, inform the Association of the Commission action placing it on notice. A copy of this notice shall be forwarded to the Commissioner of Education.

An Association placed on notice will have until the next scheduled meeting of the Commission to document that it is again fulfilling the Criteria for Approving Accrediting Associations. The Association's appointed consultant will be responsible for bringing the document to the Commission meeting. If the Association provides the necessary documentation, according to this time schedule, the Commission, by vote, shall remove the notice and, by certified mail, inform the Association of such action.

If the Association does not provide the necessary documentation in the prescribed time, the Commission shall, by vote, withdraw approval of the Association's accrediting program. The Chairman shall report, by letter, the Commission's action to the Commissioner of Education.

Reapplication for Membership

An Association that has been removed from membership may reapply for approval and membership no sooner than twelve months after the date of termination of approval and membership.

APPEALS PROCEDURES

I. Appeals by Approved Associations

An approved Association is accorded the right to appear before the Commission to contest any proposed adverse action.

The procedures to be followed are:

Appeal From the Decision of the Commission to Remove Approval

- A. The Association is to be notified in writing of the proposed removal of Approval and the reasons for such action at least one month prior to the meeting of the Commission at which the association's status shall be considered.
- B. The Association may request to have its representative(s) appear before the Commission to lodge an appeal or to submit additional evidence.

II. Appeals by Associations Denied Approval

An Association that is not approved may appeal the decision to reject its petition for approval by following these procedures:

- A. The Association is to be notified in writing of the Commission's decision not to grant approval and the specific reasons for this action within two weeks of this decision.
- B. The Association must notify in writing the Commission at least one month before the next meeting of its desire to appeal.
- C. The Association, working with its consultant commissioner, may submit additional documentation or documents requested by the Commission at least two weeks before the next scheduled meeting.
- D. The Association may request to have its representative(s) appear before the Commission to present its case.

SAMPLE

SAMPLE

TEXAS PRIVATE SCHOOL ACCREDITATION COMMISSION
OBSERVATION REPORT OF ON-SITE ACCREDITATION TEAM VISIT

Name of Organization/Association _____

Location of On-Site Evaluation _____

1. What evidence did you find of team preparation for this visit?
2. What evidence did you find of team training for this visit?
3. Briefly describe the visitation schedule, including elements of the visit: e.g., classroom observation, department head interview, Board meeting, etc.
4. Give evidence that the visiting team demonstrated understanding of the scope of the assignment.
5. Give evidence that the visiting team conducted its evaluation in the context of the school's statement of philosophy and purpose.
6. Comment on the professional conduct of the visitors. (Include a description of the makeup of the team.)
7. General Comments:

8. Commendations:

9. Recommendation:

10. Based on your observation and review of the organizations' resources for the accreditation visit, do you consider the process worthy of TEPSAC approval?

Yes _____ Uncertain _____ No _____

Observer _____

Date and Length of Observation _____

TEXAS PRIVATE SCHOOL ACCREDITATION COMMISSION

Application to Petition for Approval

Date: _____

ASSOCIATION _____

Address _____

Telephone _____

Date of Founding _____

Is the Association incorporated? _____

Grade levels Association evaluates and accredits _____

Chief Operating Officer _____

Date of Appointment _____

Board Chairman _____

Term Expires _____

Signature of Chief Operating Officer _____

Signature of Board Chairman _____

With this application the following items should be submitted:

1. The Association's Standards for Membership
2. The Association's Operation Manual
3. A current list of schools accredited by the Association
4. Copies of the Association's published descriptive material
5. Payment of the Application Fee

Requirements for Documenting Compliance with Criteria and Standards

(For Guidance Only)

Petitioning associations are responsible for demonstrating compliance with the Texas Private School Accreditation Commission Criteria. An association may submit documentation that it has prepared for NCPSA or the NAIS Commission on Accreditation if it has been completed within the past or current year and all information and data are up to date. If the association is completing the documentation (petition) solely for TEPSAC, it should comply with the following instructions. The term, petitioning association, applies to both new applicants and to member associations.

The title page should include the

- ✓ Name of the association, including the name of the parent (sponsoring) body if it is a subdivision of a larger entity,
- ✓ Address of the petitioning association,
- ✓ Telephone number,
- ✓ Date of submission,
- ✓ Status of the association (i.e. new applicant or current member), and
- ✓ Scope of the association's accreditation (grade levels included in its member schools).

Narrative responses should correspond to each criterion.

- ✓ Organize the responses on a criterion-by-criterion basis, restating both the criterion number and the item followed by a description of how the association specifically complies with it.
- ✓ In describing the compliance with each criterion, state clearly which association officials, committees, organizations, or volunteers perform specific functions or receive certain services. For example, it is not sufficient to state that the organization provides training for visiting committee members. Who does it, when, how often, where? Be specific.
- ✓ Provide a description of the organizational structure.
- ✓ When referring to documents in a narrative statement, cite the exhibit and page numbers.

Organization of Documentation

- ✓ In most cases, the documentation should be placed in a tabbed section with the narrative for that criterion. However, exceptionally lengthy documents may be in a separate binder or section but must be clearly noted for reference.
- ✓ If a document is used as a reference in multiple responses, it can be cited without including additional copies in each section.
- ✓ Excerpts from pertinent documents that address specific items may be used rather than copying entire documents that may not be directly relevant.
- ✓ Names of schools, individuals or other identifying information should be deleted from materials such as evaluation or site visit reports that serve as models.
- ✓ Number and identify all exhibits and documents clearly and consistently.
- ✓ Supply a list or table of contents for all exhibits.

Compiling the Petition

- ✓ Petitions and documents must be bound in secure form.
- ✓ Make tabs for each section and for the exhibits.
- ✓ Number all pages.
- ✓ Include a complete table of contents at the front of the petition.

Number of Copies

- ✓ New applicant associations must provide a copy of the full petition for each member of the commission.
- ✓ Current members undergoing review provide two copies, one for the liaison and one for the TEPSAC office.

Circle the rating for each item of record keeping.

E = Excellent

S = Satisfactory

N = Needs improvement

1. Records for each school are maintained to enable ready access to information.	E	S	N
2. File contents enable tracking of each school in the accreditation process.	E	S	N
3. Contents of school records verify its accreditation status.	E	S	N
4. Records are kept orderly, secure, and accessible to appropriate staff.	E	S	N
5. Records and procedures for recruiting visiting committees, establishing visit schedules, procedures, and communications are thorough and effective.	E	S	N
6. Adequate back-up systems for electronic and hard copy files are in place.	E	S	N
7. Financial records (including the audit or review) are adequate to document prudent fiscal management and compliance with state and federal regulations.	E	S	N
8. Financial records (budget, audit etc.) demonstrate sufficient financial resources to maintain the current operations, services, and programs.	E	S	N
9. Minutes of standards or membership meetings pertaining to accreditation clearly document decisions and actions.	E	S	N
10. Based on the minutes, agendas, and related correspondence, the membership and the governing body are kept informed of legal and financial issues, administrative actions, and decisions needed to govern effectively.	E	S	N
11. Evidence showing that reasonable complaints and inquiries regarding member schools are being handled responsibly and professionally.	E	S	N
12. Publications (including web sites) clearly state the purpose, bylaws, standards, rules and procedures of the association.	E	S	N

Comments. Relate comments to the specific item number above.

Part II. Interviews

The TEPSAC reviewer will conduct interviews with the chief administrator and appropriate staff regarding the accreditation procedures of the association. The interview should include, but is not limited to, the following topics and questions.

1. Is the organizational structure and staffing of the association adequate to implement the accreditation program effectively?
2. What are the qualifications and skills of the administrators and staff? Are they sufficient to meet the needs of the accreditation process?
 - a. Are there skill sets or competencies that need to be strengthened or added to the office operation?
3. If the association provides services in addition to accreditation, what is the relative importance of the accreditation process in the organizations priorities?
4. What steps or procedures does the association have in place for strategic thinking and promoting healthy sustainability? What are the major short-term and long-term goals?
5. Describe the procedures for communicating with member schools re: accreditation practices, standards, requirements, and for responding to complaints or grievances.
6. Describe the procedures for communicating with nonmember and public inquiries or requests for information.
7. What does the administrator and staff perceive as the greatest strengths in implementing the accreditation process?
 - a. What changes or additions does the staff perceive would improve the accreditation?

III. Summary

With regard specifically to the organizational structure, office management and operations, financial management, procedures for organizing school visits, communication, and accreditation decision process, what observations, commendations, and recommendations do you make for review by the commission?

Observations:

Commendations:

Recommendations:

Texas Private School Accreditation Commission

ANNUAL REPORT FORM

Reports are to be typed or word processed and filed in September each year.

Name of Accrediting Association	Phone	
Contact Person	Fax	
Mailing Address	E-mail	
City	State	Zip
Current TEPSAC Recognition Status	Date Status Was Awarded	

PART I. BASIC DATA

Answer the following as completely as possible. Information should reflect the last complete academic year (unless otherwise stated).

- For the last three complete academic years, how many schools have been involved in each category?

CATEGORY	2 Years Ago	1 Year Ago	Current School Year
Accredited Schools			
Pre-Accredited Schools			
Total in Accreditation Process			

- For the last three complete academic years, give the total number of member schools in the association, including those not involved in the accreditation process.

	2 Years Ago	1 Year Ago	Current School Year
Total Member Schools			

3. Cite numbers for the following accreditation activities accomplished by the accrediting association during the past complete academic year.

ACTIVITY	TOTAL NUMBER
New Applications	
School Site Visits (all purposes)	
Schools Awarded Full Accreditation Status (First-Time)	
Schools Denied Accreditation	
Schools Placed on Exception, Warning, or Probation	
Accreditation Reevaluations	
Total Number of Students Enrolled (all schools in the accreditation process)	
Conferences/Workshops/Training Seminars	
Other Accreditation Activities/Services	
Number of High School Graduates from Accredited Schools	

PART II. SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE

For each item listed below, please check if it has remained the same or changed since the last submission of documentation to TEPSAC. For each item marked CHANGED SINCE LAST REPORTING, submit an explanation of any substantive changes, deletions, or additions, and include revised materials / documentation with the ANNUAL REPORT. When including materials and documentation, please label each sheet with the item number (and the standard number, if appropriate) in the upper right-hand corner. All materials for the Annual Report should be submitted at the same time.

ITEM/STANDARD	REMAINED THE SAME	CHANGED SINCE LAST REPORTING	NEW DOCUMENTS INCLUDED
1. Purpose/objectives of the accrediting association			
2. Location of accreditation association headquarters			
3. Participating schools located outside of the U.S.			
4. Accreditation and pre-accreditation status levels			
5. Public relations flier and key publications			
6. Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws			
7. Legal governing body			
8. Accreditation procedures			
9. Application form/procedures			

ITEM/STANDARD	REMAINED THE SAME	CHANGED SINCE LAST REPORTING	NEW DOCUMENTS INCLUDED
10. Nondiscrimination policies			
11. Strategic/Master Plan			
12. Accreditation manual/handbook			
13. Accreditation fees and charges			
14. Other items related to standards or substantive change			

The following materials must accompany the ANNUAL REPORT and be current as to the date of submission:

- A. **MEMBERSHIP LISTING**, in Texas, of all schools participating in accreditation (accreditation and pre-accreditation status levels)
- B. **LISTING OF ALL MEMBERS OF THE GOVERNING BOARD**
- C. Any **revised or new brochures, publications, letters, advertising copy, etc.** from the above list.
- D. Identification and description of **any new initiatives** (programs, improvements, etc.)

Please designate your agency's current official appointee to TEPSAC:

Official Representative: Name, Title, and Position

Alternate: Name, Title, and Position

By signing this document, the accrediting association is attesting to the accuracy of this Annual Report and all supporting documentation.

TEPSAC recognition and continuance in the association is based on the fulfillment of required procedures and standards, as validated through an annual review by the TEPSAC Commissioners. The submission of this Annual Report or the payment of required TEPSAC fees does not guarantee ongoing recognition, continuance, or otherwise obligate TEPSAC for Private School Accreditation.

Signature of Chief Administrative Officer

Date

Signature of Preparer (if different from above)

Date