



Western Catholic Educational Association  
Catholic Schools Accrediting Commission



## What is WCEA ?

Western Catholic Educational Association is a private educational accrediting agency established under the auspices of the Bishops of the Catholic (Arch) Dioceses of California.

## WCEA Mission Statement

The mission of WCEA is to promote quality Catholic Education for our students in our member elementary and secondary schools through an accrediting process that assures the primacy of faith formation and educational excellence.

## The Purpose of WCEA

The major purpose of this agency is to coordinate the accreditation process by assisting schools in their self-evaluative programs, to establish general standards for excellence, to grant WCEA Accreditation, and to cooperate formally with other regional accrediting organizations as determined by the WCEA Board of Directors.

## The Process of Accreditation

Each member diocese has both an elementary school and high school Commissioner. It is the responsibility of the respective Commissioners to assist the school community in the preparation of a Self Study document using an approved Improving Student Learning (ISL) protocol or Ensuring Educational Excellence (E3) protocol. These protocols are criteria-based and lead the school to examine specific aspects of school life and the extent to which the criteria are currently being met. The school community then prepares for a three-day visit by an accreditation committee composed of educators who are trained evaluators from other schools with educational expertise. The new factor on Catholic Identity and its eight standards was approved by the Bishops in 2008 and is integrated throughout the WCEA Protocols.

## The Visit

A Visiting Committee spends three days with the school community after review of the Self Study document. During the visit, the Committee visits classrooms, investigates the written evidence of responses to the WCEA criteria, holds interviews with the members of the school community, and prepares a written report on findings during the three-day visit. The Committee also writes a recommendation for the Accreditation Status based upon factors relative to the school community's successes and growth needs.

## Accreditation Status

The Accreditation Status is for six years. However, a school community will be given annual requirements to maintain the six-year accreditation status.



## Self Study, Visiting Committee Report, Justification Statement & Accreditation Status

After the Visiting Committee has completed its work, the Visiting Committee Report, Justification Statement, and recommended Accreditation Status are reviewed by a team of WCEA Commissioners. The team of WCEA Commissioners will affirm the recommended Accreditation Status or designate an alternative one. Each school is then accredited at a full meeting of WCEA Commissioners. In California, Hawaii, and Guam, WASC (Western Association of Schools & Colleges) then reviews the materials and co-accredits the school. In other western states, each diocese works with its state accrediting agency according to applicable co-accreditation agreements.



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