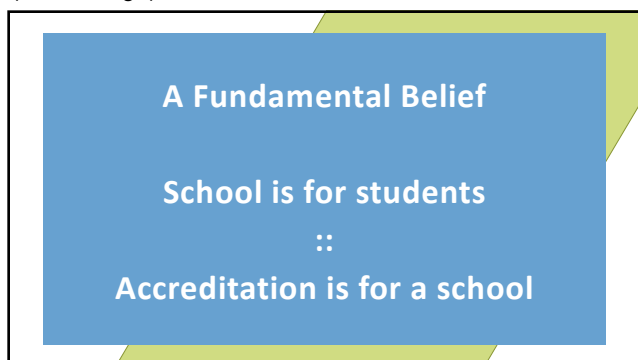
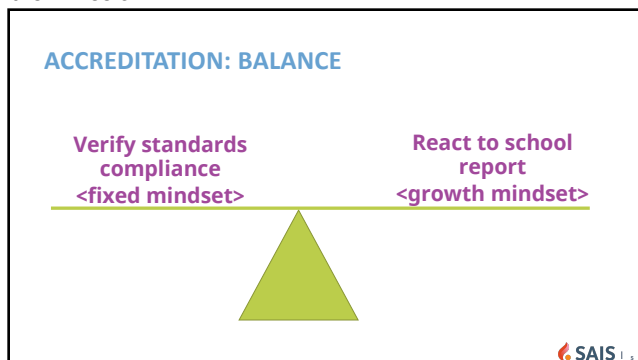




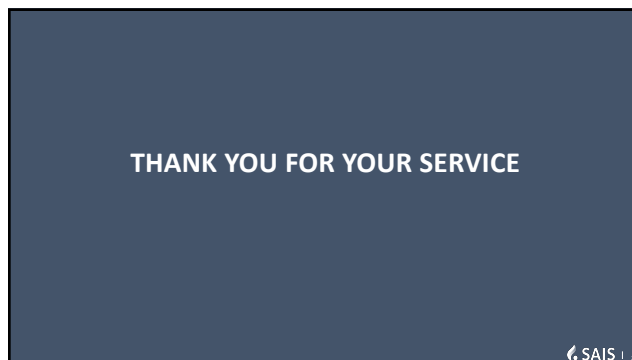
- 1  
INTRODUCTIONS Get to know your team and help them get to know each other. A suggestion is to have them pair off and introduce one another; if you are comfortable, ask a whacky question like what's your favorite song or favorite fruit or vegetable – or be a little more serious and ask them to recount their greatest success as a teacher (or challenge).



- 3  
BACKGROUND Schools serve students; not parents, teachers, alumni, or trustees. Accreditation must serve the needs of the school or it isn't worth doing. You may want to touch on your goals for the visit – to be professional, represent yourself and SAIS well, and to leave the school with meaningful recommendations that will help them fulfill their mission.



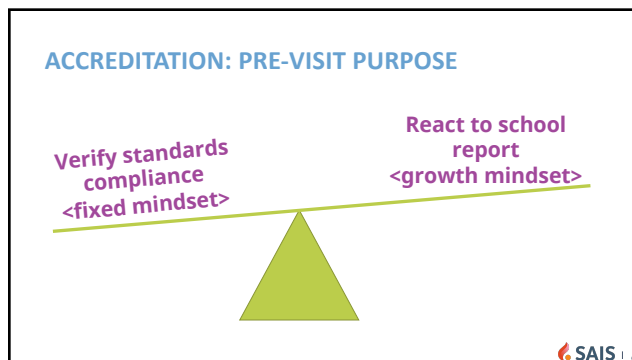
- 5  
PURPOSE 1 Leg 1 and Leg 2 on a balancing scale. There is a constant tension in accreditation between needing to assess compliance, which is a fixed mindset, and aspirations, which is a growth mindset. I have found the school's response to standards [strong / good / adequate / really bad – in which case the visit probably shouldn't be taking place at this time!!]



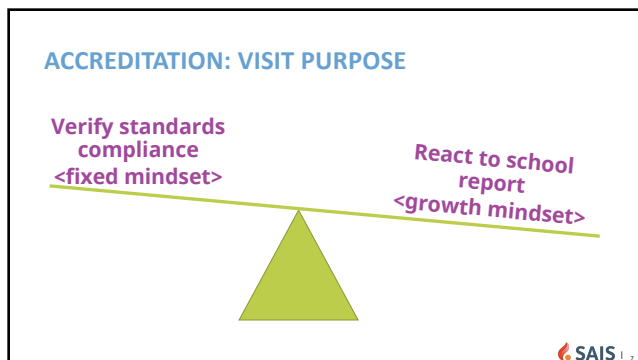
- 2  
THANK YOU Thank the team for their service. We couldn't do it without you and we wouldn't want to try. Visits are mentally and physically grueling. You will probably sit around a lot in meetings talking to people. Try to take care of yourself during the visit as best you can. We have a lot of important work to accomplish in a small amount of time.



- 4  
OVERVIEW The three legs work together – the school documents that it complies with standards and completes a strategically minded self-study. The visiting team verifies the standards in action and assesses the school's plans for its own mission fulfillment.



- 6  
PURPOSE 2: PREVISIT Compliance with standards is a summative exercise and lends itself to checking boxes. The purpose of my pre-visit was bent more to standards compliance – but not exclusively. And the purpose of the visit may be bent more towards growth, but also not exclusively. While we aren't looking for "gotcha" moments, we need to verify that what they say they are doing is what they are actually doing. \*Safety of facilities and students and community is critical and can not be compromised



7  
PURPOSE 3: VISIT During the visit we will not only focus our attention on verifying the school's compliance with standards (do the policies and procedures they wrote about match with what they are doing) we will also focus on the school's plans for its future – its formative growth mindset. BOTH ARE IMPORTANT! And at different times in a school's maturation, they may sway more one way than the other.

**THE SCHOOL WE ARE VISITING**

**Snapshot: Mission of the school**

**Snapshot: Strategic goals the school has identified**

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ABOUT THE SCHOOL YOU ARE VISITING Feel free to insert the school's mission and its goals that it stated in the school snapshot.

**VISITING TEAM ASSIGNMENTS**

Goal Area 1  
Goal Area 2  
Goal Area 3

*Usually, two team members assigned to review and respond to each goal area.*

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ASSIGNMENTS Feel free to insert actual names to match up to the goals – you probably want to have more than one person on each goal and it is OK if someone isn't an expert in the goal area – we are looking for responses to what the school has created.

**THE ACCREDITATION PROCESS**

**Conducting the visit**

- Assignments
- Behaviors
- Responsibilities

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Everyone on the team will have multiple assignments – both for verifying standards compliance and for reviewing and reacting to the school's strategic vision for its future.

**VISITING TEAM ASSIGNMENTS**

Standard 1: Mission  
Standard 2: Governance and Leadership  
Standard 3: Teaching and Learning  
Standard 4: Stakeholder Communication and Relationships  
Standard 5: Resources and Support Systems  
Standard 6: Virtual Learning

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ASSIGNMENTS Feel free to insert actual names to match up to the standards. You probably want to have more than one person on each standard. Don't try to get this perfect, just make the assignments and if your team wants to switch, that's fine. This is a good time to review the visit schedule. In slide 14, you will have a chance to go into detail about how to conduct the interviews. \*\*you should have already made these assignments and communicated them in one of the letters to the team\*\*

**BEHAVIORS: VISITING TEAM TO-DO LIST**

- Be professional – you represent your school and SAIS
- Respect the school's culture
- Be as unobtrusive as possible
- Conduct interviews, observe school activities and culture, examine artifacts
- Help write visit report

SAIS

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TO DO The team represents themselves, their own school, and SAIS. Professionalism and empathy are very important. I guarantee that the school is as nervous or more so than we are about the visit – so be a calming influence on the school, put them at their ease, and help them understand that we are here to help.

## BEHAVIORS: VISITING TEAM NOT TO-DO LIST

- Do not continually reference your own school
- Do not impose your cultural or educational biases
- Do not appear overly judgmental
- Do not interrupt the school day any more than is absolutely necessary

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Try to be a community of learners and servant leaders. If you see someone on the team start to view the school through their own bias or mission, let that person know! And if you agree to that as a normative behavior now, then hopefully you won't have to enforce/remind/discipline later.

## RESPONSIBILITIES: TEAM VISIT

### → Data collection

- Interviews not inquisitions.
- Interview small groups (or break large into small tables) to hear as many representative voices as possible.

### → Frequency of response method for stakeholder interviews:

- Ask the same questions of each stakeholder group.
- What do you consider the school's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities for growth, impediments to growth
- Analyze which responses occur with highest frequency to inform good recommendations and commendations.

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RESPONSIBILITIES 1 Take time to talk about HOW you want interviews to go (who leads them, what questions to ask, how to listen for the goal areas to be addressed). There are different techniques you can follow – refer to the sample questions and techniques in the Guidebook and on the chairs resource page.

## RESPONSIBILITIES: TEAM VISIT

### Classroom observation

- Looking to see the mission lived out in the classroom. It is not necessary to visit every classroom (check with your team chair to make sure this matches the school's expectation). You should stay no more than 3-5 minutes

### Artifacts

- Examine documents in support of the school's goals and accreditation efforts

### Confirmation of the school's efforts

### Visit report

### Post visit survey

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RESPONSIBILITIES 2 Classroom visits should be brief and as unobtrusive as possible. During the visits, conversations, and interviews, team members should remember their standard and their strategic goal writing areas and ask appropriate questions about the process, involvement, and development of the goals and plans. Visit report is due within 10 days of the conclusion of the visit. After the visit concludes, SAIS will send you a survey – please answer it.

## KEY IDEAS

### Authenticity and engagement

- A school must be authentically engaged in the accreditation process

### Journey and destinations

- Accreditation is a process for demonstrating the shared educational journey which a school is on. Education is not about the destination, but about the path we help students discover

Inspection is compliance

Accreditation is growth

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OVERVIEW Feel free to talk about these concepts as much or as little as you would like or feel comfortable doing.

## STANDARDS AND INDICATORS

- School must be in compliance with all indicators
- Presented as a self-contained document and sent to chair about two weeks before pre-visit and available to team in the Portal
- Chair reviews responses and documents at pre-visit
- Team helps see responses in action

Verify and be diligent,  
but don't let the standards bog you down

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STANDARDS / COMPLIANCE It is very easy to get lost in the weeds and the school needs us to help ask questions they didn't see to ask themselves and to poke and prod at the way they are carrying out their mission in their strategic goals. You have standards you are assigned and there is time in the schedule to talk about verification. All team members should have read through the standards and indicators prior to the meeting.



## THE ACCREDITATION PROCESS

The School's Self-Study  
and School Report

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## SCHOOL REPORT FOUR CRITICAL QUESTIONS FOR EACH GOAL

- Where is the school right now? (Profile)
- Where does the school want to go? (Vision)
- How will the school get there? (Plan)
- How will the school track its progress? (Results)

The key to success will be creating  
measurable milestones for the journey



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**SCHOOL REPORT BIG PICTURE** The report the school wrote addresses the four critical questions relative to each goal area.

## SCHOOL REPORT SAMPLE FORMAT

- Introduction
- GOAL AREA 1:
  - Profile of where the school currently is with respect to school-wide strategic goals
  - Vision for where the school wants to be with respect to school-wide strategic goals
  - Plan for achieving the vision
  - Results measures of progress towards visions
- GOAL AREA 2: etc.
- Conclusions



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**SCHOOL REPORT DETAIL** This is from the Guidebook and the training the school received – their actual report may look different. That's fine. Your job is to react to the goal areas in your report.



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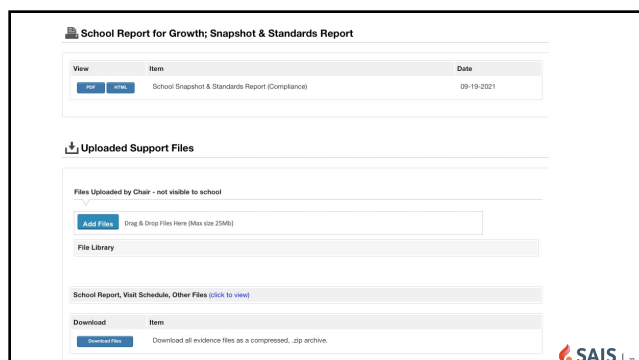
## SAIS ACCREDITATION PORTAL

- The Portal is a collaborative tool.
- All team members have a unique login.
- The school's information is in the Portal.
- Write your report in the Portal.
- Refer to the Portal quick reference guide.
- <http://portal.sais.org>



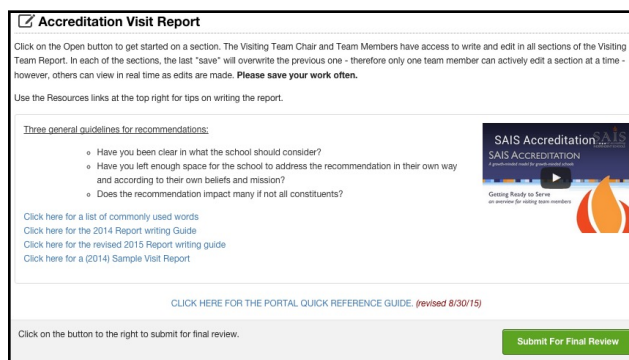
22

**PORTAL** All team members have their own login – if you have technical problems – contact SAIS. \* You may find it easier to have everyone log in at this point and follow along to discover different parts of the Portal – you could team up more experienced or techy people with less experienced or less tech people.



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**PORTAL: ACCESSING SCHOOL MATERIALS** Again, it may be easier to look at your actual school rather than the screen shots.



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**PORTAL: INSTRUCTIONS AND HELP** Also look at the top navigation of the Portal – help files, etc. Also find the Portal quick reference guide.

The visit report responds to the school's strategic goals for its mission fulfillment

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Accreditation Visit Report			
View	Item	Last Edit	Status
<a href="#">Open</a>	Introduction	12-01-2015 10:38pm	<a href="#">Mark Complete</a>
<a href="#">Open</a>	Goal Area 1	---	<a href="#">Mark Complete</a>
<a href="#">Open</a>	Goal Area 2	---	<a href="#">Mark Complete</a>
<a href="#">Open</a>	Goal Area 3	---	<a href="#">Mark Complete</a>
<a href="#">Open</a>	Goal Area 4	---	<a href="#">Mark Complete</a>
<a href="#">Open</a>	Goal Area 5	---	<a href="#">Mark Complete</a>
<a href="#">Open</a>	Goal Area 6	---	<a href="#">Mark Complete</a>
<a href="#">Open</a>	Additional Commendations and Recommendations	---	<a href="#">Mark Complete</a>
<a href="#">Open</a>	Summary and Recommendation	---	<a href="#">Mark Complete</a>

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VISIT REPORT DETAIL 1 The Portal is a collaborative tool – each blue box can be accessed by one editor at a time (the first person to click on the open button) and any number of viewers (subsequent people to click on the open button) – this feature is addressed more fully in the Portal quick reference guide.

**Goal 1 Title**

The title for goal area 1 is being

**Description**

1 words (View archived versions (0))

**Commendations**

The visiting team commends the school for the following:

1 words (View archived versions (0))

**Recommendations**

The visiting team recommends that the school consider the following:

1 words (View archived versions (0))

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VISIT REPORT DETAIL 2 The live Portal has specific instructions for each of these sections. Any section we leave entirely blank will not generate into the final visit report – so if you only have three goal areas, leave areas 4, 5, and 6 blank. And if you have no additional commendations or recommendations, leave that section blank as well.

## WRITING THE VISIT REPORT

- Written as a single, unified voice
- Substantiate findings
- Use clear language and appropriate grammar
- Incorporate data collected from interviews, observations, and artifacts
- Relate findings to student learning and organizational effectiveness
- Do not name individuals, prescribe a monetary solution, endorse specific products or programs
- Avoid personal bias

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## WRITING CONVENTIONS AND FORMATS

- Use active voice
- Should read as one voice
- Complete sentences
- Use consistent font
- Proofread the report
- Make sure all sections are complete

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The Portal takes care of fonts, but all team members need to proof, proof, proof! And feel free to ask Joanne for help while you are on the visit with crafting the language of a recommendation or commendation.

## COMMENDATIONS

- Noteworthy, events, actions, practices, factors
- Actions not typically observed or expected
- Practices that yield meaningful results
- Procedures that can be leveraged to strengthen other areas

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### COMMENDATION EXAMPLES

- The academic departments have implemented comprehensive Professional Learning Communities which have resulted in documented student achievement.
- The maintenance programs are committed to using resources wisely to maintain the 100-year-old facility utilizing new technologies and green products in concert with the school's initiatives.
- Communication with stakeholders throughout the accreditation process has been excellent, with an increased use of the school's web page to disseminate and collect information.



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### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Address areas preventing school from effectively meeting their potential
- Actions having the greatest impact
  - Recommend expanding positive practices
  - Recommend improving areas where compliance with standards or best practices are marginal
- Substantive and supporting the evidence
- Visionary, strategic, process oriented
  - Your recommendations should be at 20,000 feet and allow the school help the school continue to meet its mission



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### GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- Have you been clear in what the school should consider?
- Have you left enough space for the school to address the recommendation in their own way and according to their own beliefs and mission?
- Does the recommendation impact many if not all constituents?



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### RECOMMENDATION EXAMPLES

- Consider formulating a clear process to track graduates and collect information about their future schooling, their professional choices, interests, families.
- Continue efforts to communicate the mission to the larger community (alumni, town, local university).
- Review facilities and long-range planning in order to address future growth, classroom size, and number of students in each classroom. An enrollment plan and management system should be designed, so that an orderly growth of the student population will occur. The plan should ensure that students are representative of the school's mission statement.



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### SPECIAL RECOMMENDATIONS NOTE

- You are NOT required or expected to give an explanation or rationale about your recommendations and how they will affect the school.
- This is different than other accreditations you might have done in the past.
- Please note that the school is required to address every recommendation you leave with them – make them count!



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**RECOMMENDATIONS GENERAL NOTE** The reference in this slide is to the SACS/AdvancED/Cognia “required action” format in which you state the action and the rationale – in SAIS protocol, if we have made the recommendation, there is no need to justify it.

### IS THERE ANYTHING WRONG?

- The school should consider the addition of new building space, dedicated to the use of the middle school students.  
*This is far too specific, calls on the school to spend money, and targets only a section of stakeholders. To be appropriate, perhaps it should address long range campus master planning.*
- The school should consider adopting a policy for undergoing regularly scheduled financial audits.  
*The school is required to have a full audit to be in compliance with Indicator 5.11. If you have to recommend that they fulfill the obligations of an indicator, there is a problem.*
- Ensure that dedicated time is set-aside during pre-planning for the math department to focus on curriculum mapping to target students' strengths and weaknesses, without interruption of other pre-planning activities.  
*Curriculum mapping or instructional methods mapping are good things a school should probably be engaged in for all departments, not only the math department. It should be left to the school to determine how and when to engage the faculty in this activity; it may not work for them to do it during pre-planning.*



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## IS THERE ANYTHING WRONG?

- To improve teacher observations/evaluations process, consider the following:
  - A component where teachers observe other teachers. These observations can be either formal or informal. Seeing other teachers in action will not only provide an opportunity to see what others are doing in their classroom but also allow teachers to learn from each other and help each teacher maximize their teaching potential.
  - Reviewing the formal observation process to lessen the Principal's responsibility and share this obligation with other administrators such as the vice principal, curriculum coordinator, and department head.

*There are multiple transgressions in the writing of this recommendation. The basic idea is excellent – how would you write it to allow the school the flexibility to implement in their own unique way?*



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## RECOMMENDATIONS THAT DON'T FIT

- You can use an additional “Goal Area” to provide commendations and recommendations that don't fit with any specific goal area.
- Make sure that if you do this, recommendations affect most, if not all, stakeholders. Leave enough space for the school to address within the context of their culture and mission.



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Recommendations that don't fit a school goal  
If you need MORE goal areas, ok – 1) why? 2) let SAIS know and we can add goal areas.

## THE ACCREDITATION PROCESS

### The Team and the Visit



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## CONCLUSION

The visiting team finds:

- That the school is in compliance with all standards of the SAIS accreditation process.
- That the self-study conducted by the school meets the standard of quality and thoroughness required by the SAIS accreditation process and answers the four critical questions as outlined in the guidebook.
- That the school is unanimously recommended for SAIS accreditation.



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At the end of the visit, we want to be able to say these three things: that the school meets all the standards, that the school's commitment to its growth mindset matches the expectations for a member of our community, and that the school is unanimously recommended for accreditation.

The only thing an independent school is compared to is its mission. Never should an accreditation visit evaluate a school in comparison to another school. How well a school meets standards and adheres to best practice as it pursues its mission is the focus of an independent school accreditation.



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The mission of SAIS is to strengthen member schools by providing high quality accreditation processes, comprehensive professional growth opportunities, and visionary leadership development programs.

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As representatives of SAIS (as well as or own schools) it is important to know that the main goal of SAIS is to strengthen member schools in a variety of ways. We like to say that we defend your right to be independent, keep you connected with other leaders from around the world, and help keep you informed on the things that will help you fulfill your mission.

# CONTACT SAIS

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