

## The Visit

A Visiting Team spends three days with the school community after review of the Self Study Document. During the visit, the team 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 its findings during the three-day visit. The Team also writes a recommendation of a Term of Accreditation based upon factors relative to the school community's successes and growth needs.



## The Term of Accreditation

The maximum term of accreditation is six years. However, a school community may be given a shorter term of accreditation if there are major concerns about some of the criteria being met to the extent necessary for a full six-year term.

## What is the WCEA?

The 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 maintain and improve the quality of elementary and secondary Catholic schools as educational environments that assist students in their faith formation and academic needs.

## What is 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 the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) and other accrediting organizations as determined by the WCEA Board of Directors.

## How is the accreditation accomplished?

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 Protocol (Process for School Improvement for the elementary schools, and Focus On Learning for Catholic High Schools). 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 team composed of educators who are trained evaluators from other schools with educational expertise.

## The Self-Study Document and Visiting Team Report/Justification Statement



After the Visiting Team has completed its work, the Visiting Team Report and the Justification Statement are reviewed by a Team of WCEA Commissioners. The Team of WCEA Commissioners will affirm the recommended term or designate an alternate term of accreditation. Each school is then accredited at a full meeting of WCEA Commissioners.

In California and Hawaii, 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.