



NCA CASI
Arizona State University
P.O. Box 871008
Tempe, AZ 85287-1008
www.ncacasi.org

SACS CASI
1866 Southern Lane
Decatur, GA 30033
www.sacscasi.org

NSSE
Suite 406
1699 East Woodfield Road
Schaumburg, IL 60173-4958
www.nsse.org

Standards Assessment Report

Faith Christian High School

4100 Ronnaki Road Anniston, Alabama 36207

Prepared for the AdvancED Quality Assurance Review

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Standards Assessment Report

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Introduction & Purpose of the Report

Introduction

The Standards Assessment Report is designed to serve as a valuable self-assessment and as a tool to help schools prepare for their Quality Assurance Review. The report is based on the AdvancED standards, which serve as the foundation of the accreditation process. In order to earn and maintain accreditation, schools must meet the AdvancED standards, engage in a process of continuous improvement, and host a Quality Assurance Review at least once every five years.

The Standards Assessment Report engages the school community in an in-depth assessment of each of the seven AdvancED standards. In completing the report, the school identifies the data, information, evidence, and documented results that validate that it is meeting each standard. This self assessment helps the school identify areas of strength and opportunities for improvement.

The Standards Assessment Report also serves as the primary resource for the Quality Assurance Review Team, which uses the report to prepare for the visit to the school. The team uses insights gathered from the report and information obtained during the on-site visit to provide feedback to the school and to make an accreditation recommendation.

Structure of the Report

The Standards Assessment Report is organized by the AdvancED standards. For each standard, the report includes four sections: 1) considering the evidence; 2) indicators rubric; 3) focus questions; and 4) overall assessment. Each section reinforces the other sections by asking a question that builds on the prior section.

The section entitled "considering the evidence" allows school personnel to think about the practices and/or processes being implemented and identify evidence that will support its responses to the indicators rubric and focus questions. This section helps school stakeholders engage in a discussion about how it knows it is adhering to the standards. The section is not intended to engage the school in a collection of evidence, but rather in thoughtful dialogue about how it can demonstrate that quality practices, conditions, and results are occurring in the school. The section asks, "What practices/processes are being implemented, and are they effective?" or said another way, "How do we know we are doing what we say we are doing?"

The indicators rubric enables the school to assess the degree to which practices and/or processes are in place that indicate adherence to the standard and indicators. For each indicator, the school may check if the practices and/or processes are highly functional in the school, operational, emerging, or not evident. The school should use the rubric as an opportunity to ask itself challenging questions and to respond with accurate answers geared toward self-improvement. After completing the rubric, the school can quickly see areas of strength and opportunity. The section asks, "To what degree are the noted practices/processes in place?"

The focus questions allow the school to expand on and think more deeply about the responses to the

indicators rubric. The focus questions provide an opportunity for the school to describe the systematic and systemic processes that are in place to support its ability to meet the indicators. The section asks, "How are the practices/processes implemented?"

The overall assessment describes how well schools are implementing practices and/or processes and the impact these practices and/or processes have on student results and overall school effectiveness. The overall assessment helps schools judge where they are in relation to each standard. The "operational" level is required in order to demonstrate meeting the standard. The section asks, "How well are we meeting the standard overall?"

Demographics

Public/Non-public:	Non-public
School Type:	AdvancED - Unit
Charter School:	N/A
Enrollment:	312
Gender at School:	Co-Ed
Beginning Grade:	K
Ending Grade:	12
Alternate Beginning Grade:	
Alternate Ending Grade:	
Location Type:	Suburban
Gender at School:	Co-Ed
Religious Denomination:	Christian - Non-Denominational

Standard 1. Vision and Purpose

STANDARD: The school establishes and communicates a shared purpose and direction for improving the performance of students and the effectiveness of the school.

Impact Statement: A school is successful in meeting this standard when it commits to a shared purpose and direction. The school establishes expectations for student learning aligned with the school's vision that is supported by school personnel and external stakeholders. These expectations serve as the focus for assessing student performance and school effectiveness. The school's vision guides allocations of time and human, material, and fiscal resources.

Indicators Rubric: Please indicate the degree to which the noted practices/processes are in place in the school. The responses to the rubric should help the school identify areas of strength and opportunities for improvement as well as guide and inform the school's responses to the focus questions and examples of evidence.

Definitions of Indicators Rubric:

Not Evident	Little or no evidence exists
Emerging	Evidence indicates early or preliminary stages of implementation of practice
Operational	Evidence indicates practices and procedures are actively implemented
Highly Functional	Evidence indicates practices and procedures are fully integrated and effectively and consistently implemented

Indicators: In fulfillment of this standard, the school:

1.1 Establishes a vision for the school in collaboration with its stakeholders:

Operational

1.2 Communicates the vision and purpose to build stakeholder understanding and support:

Operational

1.3 Identifies goals to advance the vision:

Operational

1.4 Develops and continuously maintains a profile of the school, its students, and the community:

Operational

1.5 Ensures that the school's vision and purpose guide the teaching and learning process:

Operational

1.6 Reviews its vision and purpose systematically and revises them when appropriate:

Operational

Focus Questions:

1. What is the process for establishing and building understanding of and commitment to the vision statement among stakeholders?

The administration of Faith Christian School, which may include board members and paid staff administrative staff (headmaster and assistant headmaster), reviews and discusses the vision statement with all faculty members--whether new or returning--during orientation at the beginning of each academic year. The vision/mission statement is discussed and evaluated in these meetings and both the faculty and administration are asked to make evaluations about the school's performance in meeting the goals and objectives. Additionally, time is given to discussion and formal recommendations concerning the ways and means for the greater implementation of the stated ideas into the curriculum of study. During the course of the year the administration reinforces these ideas through faculty meetings, memos, and continuing education.

From the very beginning of the relationship between Faith Christian School and potential families, parents are made aware of the vision, mission, and belief statements of the school through printed materials and the application/interview process itself. The school administration (typically the headmaster or assistant headmaster) discusses these items with potential families of the school. At the conclusion of these interviews, parents are given a copy of these statements in the handbook and asked to review them before the enrollment process is completed so that any questions might be addressed. The vision is reinforced through parent orientation (an annual meeting separate from the enrollment process) as well as communicated through publication of the school newsletter, the *Paw Print*, which is sent to each family with the monthly tuition statement.

At the beginning of each school year, each student is given an updated school handbook that contains the vision statements of the school. After a homeroom class orientation, students are required to take the handbook home with their course syllabi to review with their parents. Students and parents sign and return a statement that they have read and understood the same. Additionally, every classroom has the mission statement and school beliefs clearly posted for all students to see. These are referenced throughout the school year in every classroom at periodic intervals., but is specifically done during the orientation process of each semester course.

Over the course of each academic year all stakeholders (school board, administration, faculty, parents, grandparents, and students) are invited to participate in formal meetings that include the evaluation of the validity and truthfulness of the statements themselves, as well as their implementation into the overall ethos of the school, including the classroom. When it becomes apparent that a change needs to be considered, a committee of stakeholders is formed to address the issue. The findings of the committee are reported back to the stakeholders at a later meeting so that the particular aspect of the vision under discussion may be given a final evaluation by the stakeholding group, and either approved or declined.

2. What is the school's process for developing a profile and systematically maintaining and using information that describes the school, its students, and their performance?

To develop a student profile, we assimilate information from several sources. We maintain a cumulative file for each student which contains records of attendance, grades, discipline, and standardized test scores as well as annual pictures of the student to document physical growth and

changes. Although demographic information is part of the original application, we also survey parents during the re-enrollment process for information such as race, economic resources, religious affiliation, etc. We are in the process of implementing a new web-based school management system, Renweb, which will make this process much easier.

At Faith Christian School, we test the entire school population once a year and then also track our students' PLAN, ACT, Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT), and Stanford Achievement Test (SAT) scores. Other tests we use are the Duke Talent Identification Program (TIP) for 7th graders, the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB), and the College Board's Advanced Placement Exams (U. S. History for 11th graders and English Literature and Composition for 12th graders). The SAT results for the past seven years have been placed on one chart to provide a longitudinal study of our school's performance. These results are given to new and prospective parents. We have just recently begun graphing the PLAN, ACT, and PSAT scores to be able to follow trends. Our new school management software will allow us to analyze our yearly standardized testing to evaluate school effectiveness in the classroom.

We have been able to informally keep up with our alumni through email, homecoming activities, and relationships formed with faculty and staff. We also document where they are accepted and eventually attend college. This information is published in multiple places, including the web-based school management system. Information about scholarships and grants received, community service and post high school achievements is maintained and used in published information about the school. Alumni who provide email addresses are regularly kept informed of others' achievements.

Systematizing these forms of input is a process we have just about completed. Of course, standardized test scores and grades are part of the system. The Renweb software will allow us to gather demographic information much more accurately, comprehensively and timely. We intend to publish in our handbook every year our profile information to establish that we are meeting our vision, to advertise to the community and to hold ourselves accountable to continuous school improvement. Also, this data will be compiled for our website on which we make comparisons to the other schools in Calhoun County.

Probably the least systemic part of our profile development is the alumni information because they may not stay in regular contact with the school upon graduation, marriage, or career relocation. If they do not respond to our requests for updates, then we may have incomplete information on our graduates' destinations.

3. How does the leadership ensure that the school's vision, purpose, and goals guide the teaching and learning process?

The Faith Christian School administration and school board have designed the teacher application and interview process to ensure that prospective teachers understand and fit into the school's vision, purpose, and goals. They reiterate the vision, purpose and goals at each faculty orientation, encourage faculty members to learn the vision statement so it will be more automatically applied to instruction, and require that the vision statement and beliefs be posted in each classroom.

The administration, school board and teachers select curricula that fit the school's vision, purpose and goals. The leadership evaluates teaching both formally and informally, requires attendance at professional conferences, provides in-service training, supports other venues of teacher improvement, and allocates resources to target areas of improvement.

4. What process is used to ensure that the vision and purpose of the school remain current and aligned with the school's expectations for student learning and school effectiveness?

The vision of our school is emphasized during faculty meetings, curriculum committee meetings and in-service conferences. Yearly reviews are made of our vision statement during in-service days. Any changes to it are submitted to the school board for consideration, review and approval. The reviewed document is then returned to the faculty as approved or for further discussion. The updated statements are then printed and posted in the classrooms and around campus to give us a visual reminder of our focus for the school.

As a college preparatory school, Faith Christian School holds high academic expectations. Standardized test scores are used to determine strengths and weaknesses in our curriculum. We evaluate our curriculum against state and national standards and then strategies are implemented to achieve or exceed these goals.

During several summer meetings of faculty, staff, students and parents, a new attendance policy with incentives has been established to encourage regular school attendance in each class. It has greatly reduced the number of student absences, tardies, and early check-outs. Parents are encouraged to only check students out of school between classes rather than by interrupting instructional time to call a student out of class. General high school assemblies are rare, but we do meet for chapel services once a month on a rotating schedule so that time is not taken from the same class period each month. The administration takes instructional time very seriously and protects it.

Discipline is maintained in all aspects of our school including classrooms and sporting events. Self-control and Christian conduct are visible examples of who we say we are and our students (and parents/fans) are often reminded of the influence they have both inside of and away from the school.

Examples of Evidence for Standard 1: Vision and Purpose

Practices

- Discussion and reevaluation of the mission statement at the beginning of every year as well as periodic reviews
- Teacher and parent application interviews
- New-parent orientation
- Yearly lower school orientation for all parents
- Various periodic and non-periodic school publications
- Standardized test workshops for students and faculty
- Grade level meetings in elementary
- Continuing education opportunities for faculty
- Non-periodic stakeholder meetings
- Parent advisory committee
- Teacher mentoring
- Teacher evaluations
- Open communication between stakeholders and administration
- Regular elementary faculty meetings
- Classroom visits by administration
- Administrative and faculty collaboration for curriculum evaluation
- Protection of instructional time
- Maintenance of student records of assessment, attendance and discipline
- Fieldtrips coordinated among grade levels and aligned with curriculum

- Recruitment of qualified teachers
- Qualified teachers appropriately placed
- Allocation of resources to maintain alignment of practice with vision
- Board chair and church pastor speak at teacher orientation

Artifacts

- Paw Print
- Parent/Student Handbook
- Administrative/Teacher Handbook
- Application form
- Teacher application
- Mission Statement (Posted all over campus)
- Yearbook
- Website www.faithchristian.info
- Letters from teachers to parents
- Standardized testing
- Report cards
- Attendance and discipline records
- Weekly memo to staff and faculty
- College entrance information
- Records of scholarships and grants
- Stakeholder questionnaires
- Syllabi and lesson plans
- Faculty professional development files
- Approved textbooks
- Teacher supplements
- Teacher observations
- Alabama Course of Study
- Self-study for reaccreditation

Overall Assessment:

Operational: The school has committed to a shared purpose and direction. The school has clearly defined expectations for student learning aligned with the school's vision that is supported by school personnel and external stakeholders. These expectations serve as the focus for assessing student performance and school effectiveness. The school's vision guides allocations of time and human, material, and fiscal resources. The preponderance of the evidence supports an overall assessment of "operational" and is substantiated in the responses to the Indicators Rubric.

Standard 2. Governance and Leadership

STANDARD: The school provides governance and leadership that promote student performance and school effectiveness.

Impact Statement: A school is successful in meeting this standard when it has leaders who are advocates for the school's vision and improvement efforts. The leaders provide direction and allocate resources to implement curricular and co-curricular programs that enable students to achieve expectations for their learning. Leaders encourage collaboration and shared responsibility for school improvement among stakeholders. The school's policies, procedures, and organizational conditions ensure equity of learning opportunities and support for innovation.

Indicators Rubric: Please indicate the degree to which the noted practices/processes are in place in the school. The responses to the rubric should help the school identify areas of strength and opportunities for improvement as well as guide and inform the school's responses to the focus questions and examples of evidence.

Definitions of Indicators Rubric:

Not Evident	Little or no evidence exists
Emerging	Evidence indicates early or preliminary stages of implementation of practice
Operational	Evidence indicates practices and procedures are actively implemented
Highly Functional	Evidence indicates practices and procedures are fully integrated and effectively and consistently implemented

Indicators: In fulfillment of this standard, the school operates under the jurisdiction of a governing board that:

2.1 Establishes policies and procedures that provide for the effective operation of the school:
Operational

2.2 Recognizes and preserves the executive, administrative, and leadership prerogatives of the administrative head of the school:
Highly Functional

2.3 Ensures compliance with applicable local, state, and federal laws, standards, and regulations:
Operational

Indicators: In fulfillment of this standard, the school has leadership that:

2.4 Employs a system that provides for analysis and review of student performance and school effectiveness:

Operational

2.5 Fosters a learning community:

Operational

2.6 Provides teachers and students opportunities to lead:

Operational

2.7 Provides stakeholders meaningful roles in the decision-making process that promote a culture of participation, responsibility, and ownership:

Operational

2.8 Controls curricular and extracurricular activities that are sponsored by the school:

Operational

2.9 Responds to community expectations and stakeholder satisfaction:

Operational

2.10 Implements an evaluation system that provides for the professional growth of all personnel:

Operational

Focus Questions:

1. What is the process for establishing, communicating, and implementing policies and procedures for the effective operation of the school?

Policy is ultimately established by the school board; however, rarely does policy originate with the board. The headmaster is the sole policy originator. He presents policy to the board that approves or disapproves it. In the generation of policy, the headmaster may elicit feedback and the input of faculty and staff but is not required to do so, nor is he bound to include any of that feedback or input. There are levels of appeal and a grievance policy in place.

The school uses multiple avenues to communicate policy and procedure including in-service, pre- and post-planning, weekly memos, handbooks, board reviews, teachers meetings, etc. It is communicated to the families of students through various publications such as the monthly newsletter, website updates, handbooks, parent orientations, Parent/Teacher Fellowship (PTF) , parent-teacher conferences, etc. It is communicated to students through teachers, parents, announcements, and the handbook.

Once communicated, the implementation of the policy is delegated to the appropriate level by the headmaster and that party is then held accountable for that implementation. Also part of the implementation is the evaluation of policy by all levels of the school in various appropriate venues.

2. What process does the school's leadership use to evaluate school effectiveness and student performance?

Annual analysis of SAT scores (grades 1-11) is a significant method Faith Christian School uses to evaluate our students' performance and our school's overall effectiveness. The counselor leads at least one in-service each year and directs teachers toward areas of strength and weakness at each grade level. Scores are compared to previous years' results and each grade is tracked on a 10-year grid. Other standardized evaluations relative to particular grade levels include PLAN, OLSAT, PSAT,

ASVAB, and ACT scores. We also use quizzes and tests that are coordinated with the curriculum from several textbook companies whose books we use, as well as some teacher-created tests.

Alumni reports and parental feedback are important to us because they provide accounts of how people outside the school view our effectiveness. Stakeholder meetings, report cards, mid-term progress reports, teacher evaluations, and scholarship offers also help us measure our students' performance and school effectiveness.

3. In what ways are stakeholders, including staff, given opportunities to provide leadership and to contribute to the decision-making process?

Teachers are appointed to specific leadership positions by the administration. The positions include lead teachers in the elementary school, chairperson for science meetings designed to determine the proper scope and sequence of science at each grade level, internal facilitator for the SACS accreditation, PTF faculty coordinator, faculty hospitality chairman and a chairperson for the Edline grading program. Other teachers provide leadership through the presentation of workshops during in-service at Faith Christian School and at the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI) convention.

Teachers regularly meet to evaluate the curriculum, teaching strategies and student progress based on standardized tests. The results are reported to the administration along with solutions for improvement. Teachers are always involved in the reevaluation of the mission statement and the school's beliefs. Faculty meetings provide a forum for presenting suggestions and requests.

Bimonthly meetings as part of the SACS-CASI reaccreditation process including the administration, parents, students, and teachers provide an environment for the exchange of information, various viewpoints, and suggestions. Members of the Parent/Teacher Fellowship (PTF) form an advisory committee for Faith Christian School and volunteers provide leadership in fund raising projects. Parents of children with ADHD/ADD have assisted in workshops for the faculty. Class officers meet regularly with the headmaster for lunch and this allows for an informal exchange of information. Elected class officers are in a position of leadership among the student population. Selected students also attend leadership conferences. Our headmaster makes himself available to stakeholders who wish to express concerns or state a viewpoint.

Several practices are emerging. Parents, administrators, teachers, and students have met as a committee to address the attendance policy. Students are encouraged to meet with the headmaster to discuss their concerns. A formal Student Council may be established as a result.

Ultimately it is the responsibility of the school board to establish policies and procedures necessary for the operation of Faith Christian School, but stakeholder input is received with respect and appreciation. Although suggestions are taken from the faculty and stakeholders, they have minimal control in the ultimate decision making process.

4. What policies and processes are in place to ensure equity of learning opportunities and support for innovation?

Faith Christian School faculty has a unified goal, both spiritually and academically, to provide the students with the highest of leadership qualities in the above question. We believe that we are continually striving for better learning opportunities and are constantly gathering information for the support of these opportunities through our administration, other teachers and instructional information

available to us.

One area that is widely used is the media center. The librarian has a detailed, weekly schedule for the elementary grades for library usage. High school teachers secure their times with the librarian based upon instructional needs. Opportunities are also available to each student to secure information in an open library time in the early morning, at lunch time, and prior to school closing. Our librarian shows knowledge of all reading material, prepares younger students to find their own reading matter and instructs the older students in internet access for research material if permission has been provided by the parents. Another avenue to promote continued reading is the accelerated reading program. Beginning with the second semester of 1st grade, all elementary students are required to reach an attainable goal of slightly increasing points each nine weeks. (Example: Grade 5 reading point assignments are 15, 17, 18, and 18. The grade levels must read within their appropriate grade scale. Example: Grade 5 reading scale is 4.0 to 5.9.) These goals are set by the elementary faculty and are included as a reading grade. Students are encouraged by the librarian and their teachers to meet these goals for testing and reading comprehension.

The computer lab also has detailed, weekly scheduled times for the students to quicken their skills with computers. Games and other assignments are used weekly. Study skills are also taught in the computer lab as well as in the classroom. The lab teacher helps students with research in a controlled setting when on the internet.

Other support methods used by the administration are the use of monthly teacher/staff meetings. Memos are sent weekly and teachers are welcomed to submit ideas to go along with suggested topics for growth opportunities. Lead teachers may facilitate a grade-level meeting as issues arise.

Children who are more visual enjoy the use of field trips that are taken during the year. These trips coincide with the grade level curriculum for continued learning in a less-structured setting. Each elementary grade has the opportunity to take the same number of field trips. High school students are allowed fewer field trips per year, but may have subject-specific field trips, including trips to museums, industries, or live theatre.

Not only are the ABEKA, Harcourt Brace, Scott Foresman, Bob Jones, and Glencoe curricula strong foundations for our students, but the use of library-accessed books, individual curriculum books, music, computer, Spanish, physical education, the science lab and service project volunteers also provide continued learning opportunities. Physical education and service project volunteers, both in 45-minute increments, are daily portions of the school day. We are affiliated with the Alabama High School Athletic Association and our high school fields teams for boys and girls in various varsity and junior varsity sports. Spanish as an enrichment program is offered weekly to grades 4-6, then for credit in 9th and 10th grades. Service project volunteers are older students who provide the teachers assistance in filing, putting up bulletin boards, and offering individual help to younger students. A number of choir programs are also available.

Several teachers in our school have been awarded science grants to provide further teaching tools. The leadership encourages staff cooperation and cross-curricular activities. Elementary classes frequently ask a high school science teacher to arrange a lab time for them and enhance some concept learned in the classroom. Often, one teacher will take the entire grade level and do experiments with them as a whole group.

The support of the Parent/Teacher Fellowship (PTF) is very strong. Much of the donated money through sales such as Sally Foster allows new equipment to be acquired. Playground equipment and new computers have been purchased with funds raised by the PTF. Money is provided to the teachers by PTF to purchase classroom materials to supplement textbook instruction. An athletic booster group

known as Faith Athletic Development and Support (FADS) encourages all families to participate in enhancing facilities for all students. Examples include upgrading of baseball, softball, and soccer fields; bleacher purchase and installation; gym floor refinishing; and locker room updates, including the purchase of weight equipment; and other sports equipment for use by the entire student body.

An annual trip to the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI) conference provides faculty an opportunity to learn new and innovative teaching methods. The conference presenters are proven classroom veterans, often from colleges or universities, who share from their experience. Others are vendors or representatives of textbook or resource companies. Time at the conference is also spent in fellowship with other Christian teachers from across the country and is a great time of idea-sharing.

The administration continues to hire qualified teachers and update the technology, i.e.. computers; media; library books/materials and computer lab. The librarian and technology teacher constantly ask the teachers for subject matter they can acquire to enhance the classroom experience.

We are encouraged to use different styles of teaching methods to reach a variance of students in our classroom. The faculty continues to do grade level projects as teaching tools using different media, i.e.. mammal and bird projects, cloud formation projects, and collages. Our research-based material is implemented when we use cross-curricular teaching methods.

Faith Christian School faculty uses various methods of teaching all types of learners. There is not one faculty member who does not desire to be a better teacher using ideas listed above.

Examples of Evidence for Standard 2: Governance and Leadership

Practices

- School board, with input from the faculty, establishes policies under which the school operates
- School board chairman and Faith Presbyterian Church pastor communicate new information to faculty
- Regular scheduled school board meetings
- Regular scheduled faculty meetings
- Grade-level faculty meetings
- Administration regularly communicates using memos, e-mails and announcements
- Communication of policies and procedures is done through verbal instruction, parent and student handbook, newsletters, and individual teacher communications to parents
- Teachers attend in-service training regarding policies and procedures
- Administration and faculty review standardized test scores, progress reports, report cards, and alumni surveys to keep academic expectations high and innovative
- Administration works closely with stakeholders on special projects
- Stakeholders regularly invited to attend appropriate meetings and to voice their opinions
- Faculty members conduct workshops during in-service training with parent assistance, if appropriate
- Faculty involved in new curriculum selection
- Faculty and parents re-evaluate the school beliefs and mission statement periodically
- Parents are encouraged to participate in organizations such as PTF and FADS
- Parents are encouraged to accompany students on field trips, to become room mothers, to aid in special projects for children, and to help teachers with other needs
- Student have access to books, computers, music, physical education, foreign language, science lab, library, and private voice and music lessons
- Leadership encourages staff cooperation in using cross-curricular activities

- Teachers provide extra instruction for children who require additional help
- Funds provided for teachers to purchase innovative materials
- Teachers required to attend the ACSI convention

- Computers, library books, and instructional materials are updated periodically

- Teachers are encouraged to use various teaching methods to assist students with different learning styles

- Teachers keep their instructional methods current through in-service training sessions and independent research

Artifacts

- Parent/Student handbook w/directory
- Board Policy Manual
- Faith Christian School Constitution
- Faculty Handbook
- Paw Print
- Weekly Memo to Staff
- Administrative Memos
- Emails
- Teacher letters to parents
- Minutes from Stakeholder meetings
- Standardized test scores
- Grade reporting (report cards and online grading system)
- Membership in ACSI and accreditation by SACS
- Monthly Calendar
- Field trip schedule
- Lab Schedule
- Computer lab schedule
- Library use schedule

Overall Assessment:

Operational: The school has leaders who are advocates for the school's vision and improvement efforts. The leaders provide direction and systematically allocate resources to implement curricular and co-curricular programs that enable students to achieve expectations for their learning. Leaders encourage collaboration and shared responsibility for school improvement among stakeholders. The school's policies, procedures, and organizational conditions ensure equity of learning opportunities and support for innovation. While these processes and conditions are being implemented, the implementation is not systemic across the school, and the results are varied. The preponderance of the evidence supports an overall assessment of "operational" and is substantiated in the responses to the Indicators Rubric.

Standard 3. Teaching and Learning

STANDARD: The school provides research-based curriculum and instructional methods that facilitate achievement for all students.

Impact Statement: A school is successful in meeting this standard when it implements a curriculum based on clear and measurable expectations for student learning that provides opportunities for all students to acquire requisite knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Teachers use proven instructional practices that actively engage students in the learning process. Teachers provide opportunities for students to apply their knowledge and skills to real world situations. Teachers give students feedback to improve their performance.

Indicators Rubric: Please indicate the degree to which the noted practices/processes are in place in the school. The responses to the rubric should help the school identify areas of strength and opportunities for improvement as well as guide and inform the school's responses to the focus questions and examples of evidence.

Definitions of Indicators Rubric:

Not Evident	Little or no evidence exists
Emerging	Evidence indicates early or preliminary stages of implementation of practice
Operational	Evidence indicates practices and procedures are actively implemented
Highly Functional	Evidence indicates practices and procedures are fully integrated and effectively and consistently implemented

Indicators: In fulfillment of this standard, the school:

3.1 Develops and implements curriculum based on clearly defined expectations for student learning:

Operational

3.2 Promotes active involvement of students in the learning process, including opportunities for them to explore application of higher-order thinking skills and investigate new approaches to applying their learning:

Operational

3.3 Gathers, analyzes, and uses data and research in making curricular and instructional choices:

Operational

3.4 Designs and uses instructional strategies, innovations, and activities that are research-based and reflective of best practice:

Operational

3.5 Offers a curriculum that challenges each student to excel, reflects a commitment to equity, and demonstrates an appreciation of diversity:

Operational

3.6 Allocates and protects instructional time to support student learning:

Operational

3.7 Provides for articulation and alignment between and among all levels of schools:

Operational

3.8 Implements interventions to help students meet expectations for student learning:

Operational

3.9 Monitors school climate and takes appropriate steps to ensure that it is conducive to student learning:

Operational

3.10 Provides comprehensive information and media services that support the curricular and instructional programs:

Operational

3.11 Ensures that all students and staff members have regular and ready access to instructional technology and a comprehensive materials collection that supports the curricular and instructional program:

Operational

Focus Questions:

1. How does the school ensure that the curriculum, instructional strategies, and assessments are aligned and articulated across grade levels in support of the expectations for student learning?

The faculty and administration of Faith Christian School ensure that the curriculum, instructional strategies, and assessments are aligned and articulated across grade levels in support of the expectations for student learning. First of all, our curriculum is aligned with the Stanford Achievement Test, which is given every spring in grades one through eleven. Our teachers utilize the Alabama Course of Study and our math textbooks are all from the same series, so the skills are aligned year to year.

There is the additional integration of a Biblical world and life view in our science, history and literature curricula. Over the past five years, elementary and secondary teachers have compared what we teach with the Alabama Course of Study to ensure that our resources and strategies are aligned with those objectives. Science teachers have identified major concepts that should be taught in order to be aligned with the Alabama Course of Study and the Stanford Achievement Test. We work hard to see that our students are given the most beneficial learning experiences possible through a curriculum that has been studied and changed throughout the years with a goal of meeting or exceeding research-based standards.

Another area of alignment involved cross-curricular writing requirements which involve subject matter teachers and English teachers who cooperate to show the value of writing skills in a content area. All

students are required to use the research based method of MLA writing/research style beginning at grade five and continuing through grade 12.

2. In what ways does the school ensure the implementation of research-based instructional strategies, innovations, and activities that facilitate achievement for all students?

The faculty of Faith Christian School has as a priority the spiritual and intellectual achievement of all of its students. Of utmost importance is a safe and orderly environment in which to learn. Our administrators oversee all activities and coordinate a healthy learning environment for both elementary and secondary students.

The administration also creates a learning environment where teachers feel free to implement creative ideas. Our drama, music and art departments are examples of how our school goes beyond the textbook to allow students to experience new things that are encouraging to them and make school a pleasant and memorable experience. Our music department offers private lessons in voice, violin, guitar, and piano, as well as choir classes available for grades 1-12.

Our physical education/athletic department offers research-based activities that will better the health of elementary and secondary students. The athletic department offers programs for boys and girls in tennis, baseball, soccer, softball, volleyball, and basketball. Good health habits and hygiene practices are integrated into our science curriculum in the elementary and secondary grades.

According to the faculty, the administrators do a good job of encouraging lead teachers in subjects and grades to implement pertinent and timely information in instruction and technology through continuing education, in-service, or through information gained by previous experience in other schools. The administration oversees the implementation of such information through coordination with elementary and high school leaders. The administration monitors the effectiveness of the curriculum and teachers by observing classrooms and checking lesson plans. Teachers use alternative teaching techniques to reach children with varied learning styles and implement cross-curricular activities. Our students are instructed across the high school grades in MLA writing format and in technology, such as computer and library media. Teachers insist students exhibit good manners and demonstrate respect toward others.

Much of our curriculum is research-based including the Glencoe math series which is correlated to National Council for Teachers of Mathematics standards. We have curriculum review committees and we update/replace curriculum as needed. If replacement is not possible, then teachers implement the necessary tools to meet SAT and Alabama Course of Study standards. Standardized test results are reviewed by our counselor and studied by the administration and teachers to see if our curriculum and instruction are meeting the needs of our students.

The guidance department aids students through their middle and high school years to make sure they meet the requirements for graduation. The counselor guides secondary students through college entrance procedures and implements a career development program. Our juniors and seniors are visited yearly by numerous representatives of various colleges and universities.

We believe our school is implementing more and more research-based instructional strategies, innovations, and activities that will facilitate student success. As with any educational environment, there are areas that need attention. Teachers suggest that we need to become informed on new research and teaching strategies and that we need curriculum review committees for all subjects to continue to function more successfully from year to year.

3. What processes are implemented to ensure that teachers are well-prepared and effectively implementing the curriculum?

All of our teachers hold at least one college degree. When teachers are assigned their fields of responsibility, they already have fairly clear guidelines as to what should be taught, either because they are veteran teachers or because they have been trained in the standards and expectations of Faith Christian School and the State of Alabama. Administrators oversee the efforts by checking lesson plans (which are expected to be kept at least two weeks in advance), observing classes in session, and keeping communication open between themselves, teachers and parents.

Lead teachers help to monitor curriculum progress. There are also grade-level meetings to ensure that everything progresses according to the standards set by Faith Christian School and the State of Alabama. Teachers have daily planning periods to prepare lessons. Workshops, conventions, and in-service instructional days are provided and encouraged so each teacher can learn new methods of effectively implementing the curriculum.

4. How does the school provide every student access to comprehensive information, instructional technology, and media services?

Through our library, computer lab and individual classrooms, Faith Christian School strives to provide every student access to comprehensive information, instructional technology and media services.

Weekly library visits are scheduled for students in kindergarten through sixth grade. We also offer in-class access to Accelerated Reader for grades 2-6. First grade students start the Accelerated Reader program the second semester in the library under the guidance of parent volunteers who teach the children how to use the program correctly. Students in grades 7-12 do not have a scheduled time set aside, but high school students do have open access to the library and their teachers schedule classtime there as needed.

Our library resources for high school students are somewhat limited; however, Faith Christian School supplies Alabama Virtual Library (AVL) cards for all students in grades 4-12. This allows them home- and school-access to comprehensive information from an on-site database search with encyclopedias, periodicals, age-specific search engines, dictionaries, subject-specific literature, etc. We also provide our teachers AVL access and a teacher workshop so that they can be of assistance to students using this database search at school.

Faith Christian School provides at least one computer in every classroom, in addition to an up-to-date computer lab with age-appropriate educational software, computer applications programs and access to the internet. Students in kindergarten through sixth grade receive weekly computer instruction in the lab; grades 1-3 receive additional weekly math instruction in the lab to reinforce concepts being taught in the classroom.

Eighth grade students receive a daily computer class with instruction in keyboarding, research, and computer applications as part of their Study Skills course. Eleventh grade students receive a daily class with instruction in Word, Excel, Access, and PowerPoint. The computer lab is accessible to all classes or individual students as needed and scheduled.

Examples of Evidence for Standard 3: Teaching and Learning

- Open communication between administration, school board, teachers, parents, and students
- Teachers participate in grade level/department meetings
- Periodic curriculum review
- Training on instructional strategies for different learning styles
- Emphasis on phonics in early grades
- Cooperative learning groups
- Proper assessments of classroom material
- Students participate in cross-curricular writing assignments
- Foreign language program begins in elementary years
- Alabama Course of Study and national standards used as curriculum evaluation guide
- Administrators ensure quality control by frequent classroom visits, evaluations, and communication
- Extra-curricular activities offered with the belief that involved students perform better academically
- Teachers review and re-teach objectives/material
- Teachers communicate plan for a smooth transition from grade-to-grade
- Grade level teachers prepare lesson plans together
- New teachers provided with mentors
- Students encouraged to read aloud
- Well-chosen diagrams, graphs, photos and illustrations used to enhance students' learning
- Teachers set and communicate high expectations to all students to attain greater academic performance
- Teachers encourage students to become competent thinkers and problem solvers
- Teachers exhibit good classroom management and offer specific suggestions on how to cope with conflicts and frustrations
- Teachers provide constructive feedback and praise students for jobs well done
- Students tutor other students
- Teachers offer extra help during their planning periods
- Teachers ask questions that require students to apply, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate information
- Teachers instruct students in time management and organization skills
- Administration allows teachers to bring in new information to supplement instruction
- Administration oversees the implementation of activities and coordinates with leaders in the elementary and high school
- Administration and teachers open to suggestions from parents
- Guest speakers supplement classroom instruction
- Teachers attend workshops on research-based instruction
- Teachers have access to library, media, and internet to obtain instructional material
- Various in-service opportunities available for faculty, such as the ACSI convention
- Daily planning periods to prepare good lessons
- Lead teachers exist for kindergarten, Grades 1-3, and Grades 4-6.
- Peer-teacher supervision
- Regularly scheduled computer lab and library visits for all elementary students
- Additional weekly math instruction in the computer lab for Grades 1-3
- Service projects offered to high school students in order to help prepare for the world of work (given responsibilities)
- Use of physical objects in math lessons
- Accelerated Reader used to improve reading comprehension skills and motivate children to read
- Storytelling utilized in the classroom to instill a love of reading
- Science teachers provide experiments for students to witness science in action
- Physical education curriculum begins in first grade; programs encourage physical fitness
- Kindergarten through third grade participate in recess daily to develop motor and social skills
- Level of parent involvement is high

- Advanced and A.P. classes are offered in high school for college preparation
- Well-designed homework assignments relate directly to class work and extend students' learning beyond the classroom
- Established communicated and enforced fair and consistent discipline policies

Artifacts

- Master schedule
- Minutes of grade level meetings
- Program and special project descriptions
- Library policies
- School discipline plan
- Alabama Course of Study
- Progress reports on Edline for 7-12
- Curriculum scope and sequence
- Student research papers
- SAT objectives
- Test/quiz copies
- SAT scores
- ASVAB, PSAT, PLAN, ACT, SAT scores
- Gradebook
- Lesson plans
- Library resources
- Daily newspaper
- Computer software
- NCTM standards
- Transcripts and permanent records
- Attendance records
- Documented parent conferences
- Professional development files
- Teacher evaluations
- AVL cards
- PowerPoint presentation
- Teacher textbooks & supplemental resources
- Audio visual equipment
- Field trip schedule
- Cross-curricular assignments
- Resource speakers

Overall Assessment:

Operational: The school implements a curriculum based on clear and measurable expectations for student learning that provides opportunities for all students to acquire requisite knowledge, skills, and attitudes. The school demonstrates evidence of alignment between the curriculum and instructional practices with systematic implementation across the school. Teachers use proven instructional practices that actively engage students in the learning process. Teachers provide frequent opportunities

for students to apply their knowledge and skills to real world situations. Teachers give students regular feedback to improve their performance. The preponderance of the evidence supports an overall assessment of "operational" and is substantiated in the responses to the Indicators Rubric.

Standard 4. Documenting and Using Results

STANDARD: The school enacts a comprehensive assessment system that monitors and documents performance and uses these results to improve student performance and school effectiveness.

Impact Statement: A school is successful in meeting this standard when it uses a comprehensive assessment system based on clearly defined performance measures. The system is used to assess student performance on expectations for student learning, evaluate the effectiveness of curriculum and instruction, and determine interventions to improve student performance. The assessment system yields timely and accurate information that is meaningful and useful to school leaders, teachers, and other stakeholders in understanding student performance, school effectiveness, and the results of improvement efforts.

Indicators Rubric: Please indicate the degree to which the noted practices/processes are in place in the school. The responses to the rubric should help the school identify areas of strength and opportunities for improvement as well as guide and inform the school's responses to the focus questions and examples of evidence.

Definitions of Indicators Rubric:

Not Evident	Little or no evidence exists
Emerging	Evidence indicates early or preliminary stages of implementation of practice
Operational	Evidence indicates practices and procedures are actively implemented
Highly Functional	Evidence indicates practices and procedures are fully integrated and effectively and consistently implemented

Indicators: In fulfillment of this standard, the school:

4.1 Establishes performance measures for student learning that yield information that is reliable, valid, and bias free:

Highly Functional

4.2 Develops and implements a comprehensive assessment system for assessing progress toward meeting the expectations for student learning:

Operational

4.3 Uses student assessment data for making decisions for continuous improvement of teaching and learning processes:

Operational

4.4 Conducts a systematic analysis of instructional and organizational effectiveness and uses the results to improve student performance:

Operational

4.5 Communicates the results of student performance and school effectiveness to all stakeholders:

Operational

4.6 Uses comparison and trend data of student performance from comparable schools in evaluating its effectiveness:

Operational

4.7 Demonstrates verifiable growth in student performance:

Operational

4.8 Maintains a secure, accurate, and complete student record system in accordance with state and federal regulations:

Highly Functional

Focus Questions:

1. How is the assessment system currently used in your school to analyze changes in student performance?

Daily assignments, periodic quizzes, and tests are used throughout the curriculum as formal ways to evaluate student performance, as well as informal evaluations such as discussion with students and parents. Additionally, annual SAT testing is used to provide an overall gauge for evaluation of students' performance. The Alabama Course of Study is used as a standard minimum or baseline for our educational performance goals in those subject areas that are required by the state.

Teachers maintain computerized grade books to assist them in monitoring student performance. Teachers, administrators, parents, and students are able to see from one entry to the next whether or not a student's progress fluctuates. High school teachers upload grades to Edline at minimum once each week. Conferences (teacher-student/parents) may be held throughout the year as needed. Official grade reports are sent home to parents once each quarter (9 weeks) with progress reports sent home mid-quarter.

Teachers assemble twice annually as an entire faculty to review SAT test score results along with more reviews made by individual teachers. Sub-groups of faculty assemble for further evaluation as needed on other occasions. At these meetings teachers compare the current scores of their students with the results from the past year, and those of the previous years, examining them for patterns and trends. When problems are found, suggestions are made and those results are translated into the classrooms through emphasis and evaluation.

Finally, student grades are recorded in their permanent records. Instructors note those students that have significant areas of weakness that may need to be corrected between school years. Specific recommendations for resolution of any deficiency are made between administration and the students' parents.

2. What are you doing to ensure that assessment results are timely, relevant, and communicated in a way that can be used by teachers, students, parents, and external stakeholders to aid the performance of individual students?

To ensure that all interested stakeholders are aware of the students' progress, the faculty notifies both the students and their parents in several ways.

Students have their tests and daily work graded in a timely manner. Tests are usually returned the next day and discussed to clear up any misconceptions they may have about the material.

In the elementary grades, reports, papers, tests, conduct grades, etc. are sent home and returned with a parent's signature in weekly folders. The high school faculty record their students' grades in the computer and on Edline. Each student has an access code and parents may check their students' grades at any time. In both the high school and elementary grades, mid-term progress reports are sent home. Report cards are issued four times each year. The school sets aside two days per year for parents to come to the school for parent conferences; these days are extended until 5:30 p.m. to allow for working parents to attend. Parents have the option of attending a teacher conference to retrieve report cards for the 1st and 3rd grading periods or having them mailed to the home. Report cards for the 2nd and 4th grading periods are mailed because of the Christmas and summer breaks.

SAT tests are given in late March-mid April each year. As soon as the school receives the students' scores, information is given to the teachers. Information is mailed to the parents at the end of the school year. Teachers and counselors are available to discuss results with the parents. The counselor meets with students in grades 6-11 to discuss test results. During these meetings not only does she show the students their strengths and weaknesses, but she also encourages them to do their best. This holds the students accountable for their own test scores.

At the end of the year and at the beginning of the next school year, the counselor reviews these scores with the faculty in order to decide how to help the students improve their scores.

3. How are data used to understand and improve overall school effectiveness?

The faculty of Faith Christian School has set as a priority the spiritual and intellectual achievement of all of its students. We believe that our school is successfully emerging in the implementation of understanding and improving overall school effectiveness.

As administrators and professional educators, we are constantly striving to understand and identify ways to improve our schools' overall effectiveness. One method used is the process of compiling tests. These tests are then reviewed by students and teachers. By comparing the data received from standardized tests to the data collected in the classroom, a teacher is able to determine if a certain degree of progress has or has not been made toward the goals previously set. In addition to tests, educators are able to identify weaknesses in various areas through the use of cross-curricular projects completed by students. Through observations of student and project, we are able to identify weak areas and teach or reattach, as necessary.

Another method used by both faculty and administrators in understanding and improving our overall school effectiveness is the use of school-wide charts and graphs created using data accumulated across the years. In addition, graphs are compiled that allow us to identify both the strong and weak areas in our students and school curriculum. All of the information collected in these charts and graphs is then explained and discussed during in-service meetings held periodically throughout the year. Graphed data has been used to compare and explain the performances of classes from grade 7-12. As a result of all of the information gleaned from the charts and graphs, we are better able to make intelligent and informed changes in curriculum and assessment methods.

Stanford Achievement Tests (SAT) results and teacher feedback are also used to determine curriculum effectiveness and changes needed. SAT results are studied over a continuum of years. Areas of weakness are noted and steps are taken to improve these areas. Examples include implementing the Wordly Wise vocabulary program in middle school and new math and science curricula schoolwide. SAT scores have been analyzed, charted, and explained as part of our in-service training.

As with any educational environment, there are always areas that need attention. Faith Christian School remains vigilant in our search for areas in which we may understand and improve our overall school effectiveness. In doing this, we maintain our quest to provide our students with the most excellent opportunity available for spiritual and intellectual achievement.

4. How are teachers trained to understand and use data in the classroom?

Teachers are trained to understand and use data in the classroom through various methods. All teachers have degrees and participate in routine staff meetings where SAT results are explained and analyzed from year to year. We have teacher-to-teacher discussions regarding individual student progress from year to year and also peer training for teachers new to the career or to our school.

The guidance counselor does thorough reviews of standardized tests results. Teachers and the administration discuss the trends in our test data and what modifications can be made in our curriculum to improve the overall results in each grade level.

Practices

- Data allows faculty to see areas of weakness in students and in curriculum
- SAT results presented, reviewed, and compared with previous scores during in-service training by the counselor
- Counselor provides teachers with vital information or special needs of students
- Teachers utilize variety of assessments to determine student progress
- Assessments reviewed to determine if subject matter should be re-taught
- K-12 teachers use computer programs and regular grade books to document grading
- SAT and other standardized test results are charted to better display student performance
- Parents receive copies of their child's SAT scores each spring
- Grades 3, 5, 7, and 9 take OLSAT to determine intellectual ability
- Counselor meets with students in grades 6-11 to discuss individual SAT results
- Counselor meets with 10th graders to review PLAN results, 7th graders who qualify for TIP program, and 11th graders to review PSAT results
- Weekly grades sent home in folders to elementary parents
- Progress reports and report cards issued four times a year in each grade
- Quizzes and tests graded in a timely manner and discussed with students/parents as needed
- Permanent records kept current
- SAT results and teacher feedback used to determine curriculum effectiveness and changes
- School-wide graphs compiled to determine strong and weak areas in curriculum
- Certified teachers took a Test and Measurements course in college

Artifacts

- Alabama Course of Study

- Charted record of Stanford Achievement Test results
- Computer and hard copy gradebooks
- Report cards, permanent record files
- Parent conference records
- Weekly folders for elementary grades

- Copies of tests and quizzes
- Minutes of stakeholder meetings
- Policy and procedure to monitor student performance; grading scale
- Student data information
- Trend data for standardized tests

Overall Assessment:

Operational: The school uses a comprehensive assessment system based on clearly defined performance measures that yield valid and reliable results. The system is used to assess student performance on expectations for student learning, evaluate the effectiveness of curriculum and instruction, and determine interventions to improve student performance. The assessment system yields timely and accurate information that is meaningful and useful to school leaders, teachers, and other stakeholders in understanding student performance, school effectiveness, and the results of improvement efforts. The preponderance of the evidence supports an overall assessment of "operational" and is substantiated in the responses to the Indicators Rubric.

Standard 5. Resource and Support Systems

STANDARD: The school has the resources and services necessary to support its vision and purpose and to ensure achievement for all students.

Impact Statement: A school is successful in meeting this standard when it has sufficient human, material, and fiscal resources to implement a curriculum that enables students to achieve expectations for student learning, to meet special needs, and to comply with applicable regulations. The school employs and allocates staff that are well qualified for their assignments. The school provides ongoing learning opportunities for all staff to improve their effectiveness. The school ensures compliance with applicable local, state, and federal regulations.

Indicators Rubric: Please indicate the degree to which the noted practices/processes are in place in the school. The responses to the rubric should help the school identify areas of strength and opportunities for improvement as well as guide and inform the school's responses to the focus questions and examples of evidence.

Definitions of Indicators Rubric:

Not Evident	Little or no evidence exists
Emerging	Evidence indicates early or preliminary stages of implementation of practice
Operational	Evidence indicates practices and procedures are actively implemented
Highly Functional	Evidence indicates practices and procedures are fully integrated and effectively and consistently implemented

Indicators: In fulfillment of this standard, the school:

5.1 Recruits, employs, and mentors qualified professional staff that are capable of fulfilling assigned roles and responsibilities:

Operational

5.2 Assigns professional staff responsibilities based on their qualifications (i.e., professional preparation, ability, knowledge, and experience):

Operational

5.3 Ensures that all staff participate in a continuous program of professional development:

Operational

5.4 Provides and assigns staff that are sufficient in number to meet the vision and purpose of the school:

Operational

5.5 Budgets sufficient resources to support its educational programs and to implement its plans for improvement:

Operational

5.6 Monitors all financial transactions through a recognized, regularly audited accounting system:

Operational

5.7 Maintains the site, facilities, services, and equipment to provide an environment that is safe and orderly for all occupants:

Operational

5.8 Possesses a written security and crisis management plan with appropriate training for stakeholders:

Operational

5.9 Ensures that each student has access to guidance services that include, but are not limited to, counseling, appraisal, mentoring, staff consulting, referral, and educational and career planning:

Operational

5.10 Provides appropriate support for students with special needs:

Operational

Focus Questions:

1. What is the process for recruitment, induction, placement, development, evaluation, and retention of qualified teachers, administrators, and support staff?

Recruitment, induction, placement, development, and retention of qualified teachers, administrators, and support staff is of utmost importance at Faith Christian School.

Administrators maintain close contact with colleges, universities, and public schools in order to be aware of individuals who might be available to fill a vacant position. Members of the Parent/Teacher Fellowship (PTF) often make suggestions of potential employees. Current employees and support staff make recommendations of persons who would be an asset to our organization. Parents of our students and substitute teachers (who are qualified) may become Faith Christian School teachers if properly certificated. At times advertisements are placed in newspapers and contacts are made through Association of Christian Schools International. Many individuals simply come seeking employment because they have heard many laudatory comments about the operation and positive environment of our school. It is encouraging that alumni desire to return to our school to become a part of the faculty after completing college. Retirees from public schools continue to pursue their teaching careers at Faith Christian School.

Potential employees must complete an in-depth application process, much of which reveals their spiritual values as well as their knowledge, skills, and abilities. Often several interviews may be conducted and references are checked before the decision is made to offer a contract. Those conducting interviews include the headmaster, assistant headmaster, and the chair of the school board.

The administration is very encouraging and supportive of new employees. New teachers must attend an orientation to become familiar with all facets of the school. The headmaster, pastor of Faith Presbyterian Church, and one or more school board members participate in this orientation. All personnel endeavor to welcome new employees and make them feel comfortable in their environment.

Each new teacher is assigned a mentor to guide and provide assistance as needed and to facilitate a smooth transition into our school system. Grade level representatives ensure that good communication exists among the teachers, that information is distributed in a timely manner, and that adequate planning and coordination of school wide activities is ongoing. Frequent in-service meetings are held to update teaching techniques, to expand knowledge, and to disseminate information of new teaching practices. Teachers attend the annual Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI) Convention where many opportunities are provided to learn how to improve teaching methods and to share information with colleagues.

New personnel are observed and receive formal evaluations twice each year or on an as needed basis. Following observation, the administrator makes suggestions and/or commendations to that employee. The administration maintains an open door policy and encourages personnel to share concerns.

Annual raises and Christmas bonuses are given, which helps to encourage retention of qualified personnel. The school board prepares and serves annual lunches for staff and faculty, which is a demonstration of their interest in maintaining the best possible environment and a cordial atmosphere for all who are involved with Faith Christian School. Children of faculty members may attend Faith Christian School tuition free.

2. How does the leadership ensure that the allocation of financial resources is supportive of the school's vision, educational programs, and its plans for school improvement?

Faith Christian School bases our financial direction in accordance with our school mission statement. Our headmaster ultimately makes decisions regarding school finances. He is held accountable to the school board and works in conjunction with it to ensure proper placement of funds. Funds are divided into different categories such as curriculum needs, maintenance, and salaries. Prayer is the underlying basis for the functionality of the school. The church works with school leadership to keep salaries up and tuition low by supplementing the school financially.

Activity fees and monies are built into tuition. Sufficient funds are allocated for replacing and updating resources. The yearly school budget is also geared toward individual departments that are in need of extra monies. New funds and donations from inside and outside resources are allocated for the building program. It is evident there is a great need for more space. The administration is also willing to fund new technology in order to keep Faith Christian School current with technological advances.

Teachers use their monetary resources for success in the classroom. Check requests and purchase orders ensure that teachers have what is needed for their classrooms. The Parent/Teacher Fellowship provides extra funds for classroom teachers to purchase supplies. It also supplements teacher in-service training/conventions and any textbook changes that may be needed.

The Faith Presbyterian Church contributes about 10% of the cost to operate the school. Constant communication between the church, school board and school administration results in the orderly and functional system that is in place at Faith Christian School. It is clear that our leadership ensures the allocation of financial resources and is supportive of the school's vision, educational programs, and its plans for school improvement.

3. How does the leadership ensure a safe and orderly environment for students and staff?

It is the belief at Faith Christian School that children learn most effectively in a safe, structured, and healthy environment. Procedures for maintaining such an environment are communicated in detail in school documents such as the Teacher Handbook/Procedures Manual, Parent/Student Handbook, and Student Code of Conduct. The science teachers teach a unit on lab safety prior to allowing students access to the science lab; students must demonstrate proficiency in lab safety prior to being allowed to perform lab experiments.

These procedures are practiced and evident in a number of forms. Students participate in regular fire, chemical, weather, and intruder drills. Administrators and other faculty/staff leadership are present during morning and afternoon arrival/dismissal of students to ensure traffic procedures are enforced. By limiting entrances, visitors are directed to the main office to sign in and receive a pass before being admitted to the school building. Emergency contact information and individual student health concerns are updated yearly and as needed and kept on file in the classrooms, the guidance office, and the administrative office. Furthermore, faculty and administrators receive CPR training each year.

These procedures are likewise regularly reviewed, updated, and revised. Local agencies are admitted to perform safety inspections in the areas of building maintenance, fire safety, chemical spill accidents, and protection from intruder dangers. Faculty, administrators, parents, students, and stakeholders are involved in the process of maintaining current manuals that communicate the procedures for a safe and orderly environment for students and staff.

4. What process is used to ensure and monitor that each student has access to guidance and resource services that meet the needs of the student?

Guidance and resource services are essential functions of education, therefore the faculty and administration of Faith Christian School are committed to ensuring that our school provides opportunities to meet the needs of each student in these areas. The faculty believes that we are operational in providing guidance and resource services. We are exceeding expectations in most areas, but some areas can be improved. Parent orientation at the beginning of each year notifies them of available guidance and resource services. Administrators and school board members as well as teachers are informed of services offered so that they can schedule and provide opportunities for access for all students.

We are indeed fortunate to not only have an excellent guidance counselor but also to have teachers and administrators who care about students so much that they will take the time and effort to listen, encourage, support, and offer information to students. At the same time, they are not at all reluctant to refer students to others when appropriate. Our faculty feels that we are succeeding in this area as administrators, teachers, and the counselor are readily available to talk with students about successes, plans, and problems as well as to pray for and with students.

It was especially noted by our faculty that the counselor's door is always open and she welcomes students to walk in, use a guidance pass, or to make an appointment. She meets individually with students to discuss social, emotional, and academic needs.

The counselor visits elementary as well as high school classrooms for small or large group sessions and to reinforce that she is available to assist them. The counselor often serves as the liaison between teacher and student, between teacher and parent, or between student and administrators. She is never reluctant to contact a parent or administrator for support or information, and she arranges parent/teacher conferences to benefit both. She coordinates parent conferences and oversees referrals when necessary.

With both a separate telephone line and a computer in the guidance office, communication with parents is convenient and private. Parents, the administration, and the office staff can also contact her quickly and easily. All administrators, faculty, and office staff at Faith Christian School ensure that students, parents, and other stakeholders are welcome and can feel comfortable communicating and meeting with the counselor, teachers and administrators.

Adequate career, college, testing, and scholarship information is available and disseminated to students on a timely basis from the guidance office. The counselor and other faculty members assist seniors in making college and career plans, as well as applying for scholarships and completing applications. They also write recommendations for them. The counselor arranges for speakers and recruiters from colleges to present programs and inform students of available opportunities as well as important deadlines. The counselor administers each step of the testing program from ordering test materials, to arranging for the administration of tests, and finally to explaining and interpreting test results to administrators, teachers, parents, and to students in both group and individual sessions. She maintains cumulative records and sends and requests transcripts for students who transfer.

The Faith Christian School library and computer labs are open to students. We have a well-trained staff available to assist students in finding information and enjoying enrichment opportunities, as well as researching and producing papers on a wide variety of topics. Our computers are up to date and the computer aide assists students in using the computers for research and in presenting information in varied formats from simple letters to spreadsheets, from short papers to term papers and PowerPoint presentations. The computer aide is available and willing to help teachers as they assist students in using new information gathering techniques. She teaches even the youngest students to use the computer lab efficiently to reinforce learning while enhancing their computer skills. All elementary students have weekly scheduled time in the computer lab. High school students in the eighth grade take keyboarding daily and eleventh grade students take one semester of Computer Applications. Other secondary students have access to the lab as scheduled by the faculty for a specific assignment.

Our librarian and library aide are very helpful and efficient. Teachers are encouraged to request that books and materials be ordered which would enhance their teaching. They are also encouraged to use the audio visual equipment housed there or to keep in it in their rooms for daily use. All elementary students have scheduled weekly times to visit the library to check out books. Secondary students are allowed to visit the library on their own before or after school and during lunch. As with the computer lab, secondary teachers may schedule class time in the library as needed. Perhaps the most effective function of the library is the Accelerated Reading Program, which has been demonstrated to amplify reading skills and encourage students to read.

Perceived weaknesses of our guidance and resource services are mainly related to materials and physical facilities. More high school level books and materials need to be available. This, in turn, would require a larger library. Plans are in place to expand the library as the new building is completed. Teachers and students use the Anniston Public Library as an invaluable resource, and much research can be done online, particularly through the Alabama Virtual Library. Each student is provided with an Alabama Virtual Library card. A larger computer laboratory with more computers would also be helpful. This is another item considered in our long-range planning models. It would be most

helpful to have a larger guidance office, perhaps with more privacy, and one that is located closer to the administrative offices and cumulative record files. This, too, is included in future plans.

Examples of Evidence for Standard 5: Resource and Support Systems

Practices

- Contacts with colleges, public schools, ACSI, other educators, and stakeholders identify available, qualified personnel to fill vacant positions
- New teachers participate in thorough application and interview process with administrators and school board members
- New teacher orientation with administrators, school board members and the pastor of Faith Presbyterian Church
- Administration takes recommendations from faculty, parents and stakeholders
- Newspaper ads publicize the school and announce faculty vacancies
- New teacher mentoring program
- Teacher in-service
- Open communication between administrators, faculty, students, parents and stakeholders
- Very encouraging and active Parent-Teacher Fellowship group supplies many resources
- Very supportive substitute teachers
- Lead teachers in kindergarten, grades 1-3, and grades 4-6
- Prayer for teachers and needed resources
- Faith Presbyterian Church supplements school prayerfully and financially
- Headmaster responsible for developing school budget and held accountable by the school board and session
- Association of Christian Schools International Convention
- School board well informed and encourages teachers in many ways
- Funds allocated for replacing and updating resources such as curriculum and computers
- Check Request Forms and Purchase Orders used to maintain an organized purchase system
- Students may receive scholarships to attend Faith Christian School
- Capital Campaign programs provide additional monies needed for building projects
- Teachers receive comprehensive handbook with all policies, procedures, and forms needed to function effectively
- School office staff and faculty members monitor visitors on campus very closely
- Local agencies review safety standards and visit the school periodically
- Teachers present in hallways and parking lots before and after school
- Safety standards in place for weather, fire, intruders, medical emergencies and chemical spills
- High expectations for student conduct
- Buildings well-maintained and kept safe for students, faculty and parents
- Emergency contact cards kept in school office and in classrooms
- Teachers have master list of health concerns for all students on campus
- Open access to the library and computer lab for students and faculty
- Guidance counselor available to elementary and high school students
- College representatives visit annually; school and college information readily available to students

Artifacts

- Teacher applications
- Teacher handbook

- Newspaper ads
- Mentoring teacher list
- ACSI website
- Board meeting minutes
- School budget
- Mission statement
- Stakeholder questionnaires
- Check Request Form
- Purchase Order Form
- Traffic flow sheet
- Visitor name tags, sign-in sheets
- Written safety procedures posted in each classroom
- Student code of conduct
- Emergency cards
- Master list of Student Health Concerns
- College handbooks

Overall Assessment:

Operational: The school has human, material, and fiscal resources to implement a curriculum that enables students to achieve expectations for student learning, to meet special needs, and to comply with applicable regulations. The school employs and allocates staff members who are well qualified for their assignments. The school provides ongoing learning opportunities for all staff to improve their effectiveness, including both professional and support staff. The school ensures compliance with applicable local, state, and federal regulations. The preponderance of the evidence supports an overall assessment of "operational" and is substantiated in the responses to the Indicators Rubric.

Standard 6. Stakeholder Communications and Relationships

STANDARD: The school fosters effective communications and relationships with and among its stakeholders.

Impact Statement: A school is successful in meeting this standard when it has the understanding, commitment, and support of stakeholders. School personnel seek opportunities for collaboration and shared leadership among stakeholders to help students learn and advance improvement efforts.

Indicators Rubric: Please indicate the degree to which the noted practices/processes are in place in the school. The responses to the rubric should help the school identify areas of strength and opportunities for improvement as well as guide and inform the school's responses to the focus questions and examples of evidence.

Definitions of Indicators Rubric:

Not Evident	Little or no evidence exists
Emerging	Evidence indicates early or preliminary stages of implementation of practice
Operational	Evidence indicates practices and procedures are actively implemented
Highly Functional	Evidence indicates practices and procedures are fully integrated and effectively and consistently implemented

Indicators: In fulfillment of this standard, the school:

6.1 Fosters collaboration with community stakeholders to support student learning:

Operational

6.2 Has formal channels to listen to and communicate with stakeholders:

Operational

6.3 Solicits the knowledge and skills of stakeholders to enhance the work of the school:

Operational

6.4 Communicates the expectations for student learning and goals for improvement to all stakeholders:

Operational

6.5 Provides information about students, their performance, and school effectiveness that is meaningful and useful to stakeholders:

Operational

Focus Questions:

1. How does the school's leadership ensure that the school is responsive to community expectations and stakeholder satisfaction?

Since we are a private Christian school, without supportive stakeholders and a collaborative community we would cease to exist. We believe that we are operational in being responsive to the community's expectations and seeking the stakeholders' satisfaction.

All school-level meetings are first opened in prayer seeking God's wisdom and direction. The stakeholders desire this and believe that this will guide us in making wise decisions for Faith Christian School. According to our stakeholders, the school board and administration provide good leadership and are involved positively in the community. The school has been a ministry of Faith Presbyterian Church for the past 30 years. During this time the church has supported the school prayerfully, financially, and by their attendance at school functions. Parents have stated that they appreciate that the board and administration have been able to keep tuition low but yet provide a quality education. This has been made possible in part because of Faith Presbyterian Church's financial contributions.

According to the stakeholders, the school is consistent with providing communication. Some examples of this are: parent letters sent home by teachers, mail-outs, a school web site, emails, surveys, parent-teacher conferences, progress reports, stakeholders' meetings, parent and grandparent programs, discipline forms, and Edline.

The school encourages parents and grandparents to become involved in school activities. Field trips, room mothers, library aides, special emphasis days, and Parent/Teacher Fellowship activities offer such opportunities. A Parent Advisory Committee has also been established. When certain issues need to be addressed—such as reducing tardies—a committee was formed consisting of stakeholders of all ages

Community relations are important to our school. The school periodically hosts appreciation luncheons for pastors and directors of preschools in our area to ascertain how we can better help them and to promote good community relations. In addition, so that our students can apply the principles they learn in Bible courses, high school students are service project workers for at least one semester. Some of the students carry this out here on campus, but several work out in the community helping businesses and organizations. This gives the school direct feedback from the community. Students also are involved in the community through such things as Youth Leadership of Calhoun County and speaking to organizations like the Rotary Club. We also have a junior high chapter of the Kiwanis Club in our school (Builders Club).

Parents have stated that they are pleased that Faith Christian School requires teachers with degrees, has high expectations of students, and maintains as safe an environment as possible—all to the glory of God!

2. How does the school's leadership foster a learning community?

Faith Christian School is very blessed to have qualified, dedicated and enthusiastic leadership. Our headmaster, assistant headmaster and school board are committed to fostering an effective teaching and learning environment. Our leadership members demonstrate high standards of education in their professional and personal lives. Excellence is emphasized in all areas that our school encompasses. Our leadership guards instructional time by striving to keep children in class and interrupting on a minimal basis. The education of our students is not done in isolation, but involves everyone.

The leadership of Faith Christian School hires and retains highly qualified teachers. These teachers are required to maintain a professional work ethic and personnel record, and are expected to participate in continuing education. Our leadership enables teachers to work together and share ideas, and provides opportunities for teachers to learn and grow. Through teacher in-service, parent/teacher conferences (held at the end of every first and third grading period and upon request of parent and/or teacher) and personal involvement with students and parents, teachers and leadership foster a community of learning. The school's leadership also maintains a safe, secure environment so that both students and teachers can learn and flourish.

Some other key components to the effectiveness of our learning community are the use of high school students in elementary classrooms. These upperclassmen participate as service workers for the teachers and younger children on a daily basis. Teachers also assign and evaluate group projects and group work in their individual classrooms.

At Faith Christian School, we maintain rigorous academic and ethical standards by creating opportunities for students to participate in leadership positions in the school. Students receive recognition through academic and music awards, honor roll and Beta Club. We enforce strict eligibility standards for athletic and class officer participation. Leadership helps and encourages students to strive to enrich their God-given abilities and then rejoices with them in their achievements.

3. What avenues are used to communicate information to stakeholders about students, their performance, and school effectiveness?

The school utilizes print and electronic media, formal school meetings and community activities to communicate information to stakeholders.

We use online tools such as the school website, web-published grades, and email to communicate grades, school news, performance comparisons, and achievements the school has made.

In print, the school publishes a newsletter, handbook, school newspaper, a yearbook, and cooperates with the local newspaper to cover school and sporting events. The school also sends home folders, grade reports, personal letters, and testing results.

There are formal stakeholder meetings, parent orientation, awards banquets, homecoming festivities, parent conferences, open houses, Parent/Teacher Fellowship (PTF), Faith Athletic Development and Support (FADS), Grandparents' Day and morning announcements.

Indirectly, we also communicate these things to the community through our sports programs, choir and drama presentations, participation in Youth Leadership of Calhoun County, Rotary Club, missions, and other events that reach into the community. Participation in the Alabama High School Athletic Association allows our school to be exposed to the public and offers us the opportunity to be a positive Christian influence through athletics.

Examples of Evidence for Standard 6: Stakeholder Communications and Relationships

Practices

- School and church leadership has open communication with stakeholders, faculty, staff, and parents
- Biblical grievance policy in place for faculty, students and parents
- Parents and other stakeholders encouraged to express ideas to administration and faculty
- Administrators and faculty participate in traffic duty every morning

- Faculty holds high expectations for students' work and behavior, demonstrate high standards in their personal lives, encourage students to reach their God-given abilities and rejoice in their achievements
- Church invests time and finances into this ministry known as Faith Christian School
- Consistent means of communication used to keep parents and stakeholders informed about daily school activities and information
- Parent Advisory Committee meets with a school board member to voice parental concerns

- Teacher evaluations
- Mission statement and beliefs guide quality Christian education
- Administration implements mission statement and beliefs
- Host luncheons for community pastors and day care directors
- Stakeholder meetings allow individuals to offer suggestions
- Students involved in community and church organizations
- Administrators and faculty strive to keep Christ at center of lives
- High school students used as teacher assistants and tutors for elementary students
- Leadership guards instructional time
- Regularly occurring faculty meetings, grade level meetings, and elementary/ high school meetings

- Administrators encourage teachers to be leaders in various areas
- Conventions and teacher in-services provide teachers with current teaching techniques
- Cross-curricular activities in all grades
- Parent/teacher conferences

- Parents schedule appointments at any time
- School leadership maintains safe and secure learning environment

- Maintain rigorous academic and ethical standards by creating opportunities for students to lead

- Each class involved with at least one mission project a year
- Students can participate in choir and drama
- Athletic teams participate in AHSAA
- FADS raises funds to supplement athletic program
- Grandparents' Day program, Father/Daughter banquet, Family Chili Supper, Book Fair and Art Auction provide opportunities to develop relationships with parents and grandparents

Artifacts

- Stakeholder questionnaires
- Stakeholder meetings minutes

- Written grievance policy
- Parent/Student handbook
- School website
- School mission statement
- Written communications from the school to the parents such as letters, emails, weekly folders, teacher letters, progress reports, SAT results, report cards, AR reports, "Paw Print," "Mane Event," and The Lion

- Newspaper articles
- Teacher meetings minutes
- Teacher evaluations
- Faith Christian School Constitution

Overall Assessment:

Operational: The school has the understanding, commitment, and support of stakeholders. School personnel seek opportunities for collaboration and shared leadership among stakeholders to help students learn and advance improvement efforts and can demonstrate good participation by some stakeholder groups. The preponderance of the evidence supports an overall assessment of "operational" and is substantiated in the responses to the Indicators Rubric.

Standard 7. Commitment to Continuous Improvement

STANDARD: The school establishes, implements, and monitors a continuous process of improvement that focuses on student performance.

Impact Statement: A school is successful in meeting this standard when it implements a collaborative and ongoing process for improvement that aligns the functions of the school with the expectations for student learning. Improvement efforts are sustained and the school demonstrates progress in improving student performance and school effectiveness. New improvement efforts are informed by the results of earlier efforts through reflection and assessment of the improvement process.

Indicators Rubric: Please indicate the degree to which the noted practices/processes are in place in the school. The responses to the rubric should help the school identify areas of strength and opportunities for improvement as well as guide and inform the school's responses to the focus questions and examples of evidence.

Definitions of Indicators Rubric:

Not Evident	Little or no evidence exists
Emerging	Evidence indicates early or preliminary stages of implementation of practice
Operational	Evidence indicates practices and procedures are actively implemented
Highly Functional	Evidence indicates practices and procedures are fully integrated and effectively and consistently implemented

Indicators: In fulfillment of this standard, the school:

7.1 Engages in a continuous process of improvement that articulates the vision and purpose the school is pursuing (Vision); maintains a rich and current description of students, their performance, school effectiveness, and the school community (Profile); employs goals and interventions to improve student performance (Plan); and documents and uses the results to inform what happens next (Results):

Operational

7.2 Engages stakeholders in the processes of continuous improvement:

Operational

7.3 Ensures that plans for continuous improvement are aligned with the vision and purpose of the school and expectations for student learning:

Operational

7.4 Provides professional development for school personnel to help them implement improvement

interventions to achieve improvement goals:

Operational

7.5 Monitors and communicates the results of improvement efforts to stakeholders:

Operational

7.6 Evaluates and documents the effectiveness and impact of its continuous process of improvement:

Operational

Focus Questions:

1. What is the process for continuous improvement used by the school and what are the results that this process is delivering for student performance and school effectiveness?

Faith Christian School strives for continuous improvement to enhance student performance and school effectiveness. As we desire to enable students to become confident, self-directed, lifelong learners, the administrators, board members, and teachers seek to model the process of learning and growth. Adhering to the standards of SACS-CASI and continuing self-evaluation help the school to improve its academic, athletic, and extracurricular programs.

Faculty members are held to high standards. Each is required to develop and conform to a course syllabus for each class taught. Syllabi are based on the Alabama State Course of Study as a minimum standard, then supplemented to reflect a Biblical worldview. Lesson plans are kept at least two weeks in advance. Faculty members and administrators maintain constant dialogue, and formal and informal teacher evaluations provide opportunities for suggestions of change and improvement. Teacher workshops and conventions are offered and even funded by the school to improve faculty effectiveness. Faculty and grade level meetings with group discussions, evaluations, and appointments of work committees promote consistency and clarity of purpose throughout the school.

Student performance is continually evaluated based on our standardized test scores compared to others in the nation. Curriculum teams are appointed to review the textbooks and content being taught in each subject area and to suggest improvements to the administration and board to review. Recent changes in the math curriculum have resulted in improved test scores. The elementary science program has also been changed to better meet the students' needs. In addition, the mission statement is periodically reviewed and changed for the purpose of clarity and applicability.

It is our desire to keep our SAT scores in the 70th percentile or higher. Consistent evaluation of our students' performance keeps students as well as faculty on track and accountable. Edline is updated weekly to keep information available to all those concerned. In addition to the core curriculum, new electives in the fine arts and humanities have been added. Elementary Spanish, art, private music lessons, Advanced Placement U. S. History, pre-algebra, Introduction to Theatre, The Bible as Literature, and Great Books have been added to our already well-developed and successful choir, drama, speech and creative writing programs.

The consistent evaluation of faculty, curriculum and students' performance is delivering positive results as is evidenced in scholarships offered to our seniors and their success in college.

2. What steps are taken to ensure that the improvement goals reflect student learning needs that are aligned with the vision and purpose of the school?

The faculty of Faith Christian School has a new awareness of the importance of seeing early the results of the SAT scores. Many teachers now check, upon receipt of their new class list, the previous year's scores. This is helpful to find the strengths and weaknesses of certain students, along with the concepts that require further evaluation for the entire class. The student improvement areas through the SAT scores reflect quality in an academic education. The academic goals of the students at Faith Christian School are based on the national standards and our curriculum is then reevaluated. If there are needs for further projects, they are encouraged. Our administrative staff sees that each teacher is given the test results and provides any needed interpretation of those scores.

The school board sets policies and procedures as administration and teachers review them for the school. Each decision is carefully studied and evaluated for consistency with the school's mission statement.

To further reflect quality of a Faith Christian School education, cross-curricular writing goals have been well-planned by the high school teachers. Elementary faculty also share an awareness of composition skills regarding the need for more creative writing.

At Faith Christian School, a constant evaluation of curriculum goals is in place. Curriculum guides, tests, and quizzes are tools used to check the teaching capabilities. A weighting scale in the areas of tests, quizzes, and homework can show strengths and weaknesses. Records are kept and studied, once again to see if changes are necessary. Seniors complete exit surveys as yet another means of checking our standards.

Surveys circulated among the teachers, seniors, parents, and other stakeholders were filled out to ascertain the three most important student needs. Administration set goals for them in keeping with the mission statement and beliefs that were posted in each classroom. The mission statement is regularly discussed at various meetings.

The process of re-accreditation has helped Faith Christian School ensure that improvement goals reflect learning needs, and we are aligning these needs with our vision and purpose. All the areas mentioned above certainly change with each school year, but we feel we are emerging to a greater knowledge of improvement goals.

3. What process is used to ensure that the school personnel are provided professional development and technical assistance to implement interventions and achieve improvement goals?

New teachers are required to attend a summer orientation program conducted by the administration, while all faculty members attend the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI) Convention each winter. Regular professional development is also provided at faculty in-service meetings; time is used for sharing information, faculty team conferences, and guest speakers. The administration organizes in-service training and often seeks input from the faculty in order to meet their needs. Faculty members have attended subject-specific training during the summer (through international graduate work or at Jacksonville State University) or as offered by outside organizations (such as the College Board). School board members, administration, and faculty members also stay current by maintaining membership in or attending workshops offered by their respective professional

organizations. The self-evaluation process of our SACS-CASI re-accreditation is also an integral aspect of our professional development.

Technical assistance is provided through several key members of our staff. The guidance counselor assists teachers with analysis of standardized test scores. The library and computer lab staffs provide technical training on Alabama Virtual Library and assist with technology in the classrooms when requested to do so or as new equipment becomes available. The computer instructor keeps our systems working efficiently by monitoring viruses and upgrading software as needed.

Evaluations/observations of instruction by administrators or peer teachers, weaknesses on standardized tests, or input from parents can identify areas where further professional development is needed. Implementation of suggestions from stakeholders as well as teacher interests can determine in-service topics.

4. How does the leadership ensure that the improvement plan is implemented, monitored, achieved, and communicated to stakeholders?

Continuous growth and improvement are vital for any organism, including a school. If a school is not working consistently to become better and to reach new goals, then it will soon become stagnant and begin falling behind not only in test scores, but also in other areas of school growth and progress. Because the leadership is keenly aware of the need to grow and improve, the SACS-CASI self-study was initiated and an improvement plan was developed by the stakeholders and faculty under their auspices. Support from all school leaders was in evidence, as the school board and pastor communicated frequently with the headmaster and through him with the leaders of our study team. All teachers were expected by the leadership not only to participate, but to become actively involved in every phase of the process. At stakeholder meetings, held frequently throughout the school year, teachers worked with parents, students, board members, grandparents, church members, school leadership, and other stakeholders on an equal footing as every phase of our school was studied and a plan for improvement developed. In meetings with the stakeholders, a conscious effort was made to blend committees so that each one contained representatives of the various stakeholder groups. The leadership insisted that we make stakeholder meetings a priority and encouraged us as we worked through the various steps. Each teacher was expected to contribute to the development of the improvement plan and to participate in its implementation.

As our school worked through the steps in the improvement plan, our leadership team was vital to its implementation. The headmaster ably communicated suggestions made in stakeholder meetings to the school board members for consideration and possible change. As the process continues, the leadership meets with the school board members to keep them apprised of efforts to meet expected goals. This is especially effective as the school board and administration function so well together. The headmaster and assistant headmaster encouraged teachers to begin studying and implementing the improvement plan. They were willing to listen, suggest, support, help, and even provide needed time to carry out plans.

As a part of our improvement process, and a facet of our improvement plan, leadership expects the faculty to engage in learning as evidenced by earning a minimum number of Continuing Education Units each year. The school board members fully support this and are even willing to pay expenses teachers incur as they attend the conferences or workshops. The school calendar reflects days off when the faculty attends conventions and has in-service education sessions. During in-service education days and orientation sessions for teachers who are new to our school, the administration and

pastor participate in programs to foster Christian teachers' growth as well as learn new techniques and teaching methods and use new technology. As each teacher is observed and counseled by the headmaster and assistant headmaster throughout the school year, their progress in assimilating and implementing the improvement plan is monitored, they are prompted and encouraged, and suggestions are made. As we are working toward reaching the stages of our improvement plan, not only does the leadership constantly monitor achievement, but the School Improvement Team also meets regularly to review progress and to determine priorities. The school leadership team continually encourages teachers to implement suggested changes.

The leadership of this school is very effective in communicating with stakeholders both the goals of the improvement plan and progress toward improvement. Those attending and participating in stakeholder meetings were intimately involved in the whole process, from evaluation and determination of strengths and weaknesses to the formulation of a plan then to the plan's implementation. Other stakeholders are kept abreast of the progress of the improvement plan and other issues by articles in the Paw Print, in newsletters, on Edline and on our website. Other evidences of our progress are also observable on Edline and on our website as Stanford Achievement Test results and other current measures of improvement are posted. The Parent Advisory Committee meets with school board members and ideas are exchanged and progress reported. School committees are also established to review and monitor progress and reports from those meetings are communicated to the stakeholders. The headmaster and other school leaders are proactive in talking with parents and other stakeholders to inform them about our school, our improvement plan, and progress planned and achieved toward implementing it.

Examples of Evidence for Standard 7: Commitment to Continuous Improvement

Practices

- Consistent evaluation of students' grades and conduct
 - High standards for teachers and students
 - Curriculum upgrades implemented as approved by the school board
 - Good communication between the administration, faculty, students and parents
 - Accreditation process encourages continuous school improvement
 - Teachers attend annual ACSI convention and other workshops for professional development
 - Faculty continually evaluates student performance using daily evaluations and standardized test scores
 - Students held accountable for their academic performance
 - Continual self-evaluation helps the school improve its academic, athletic and extra-curricular programs
 - Technology upgrades implemented when funds are available
 - Teacher evaluations completed by the administration; reviewed with teachers along with suggestions for improvement
 - Stakeholders periodically review mission statement
 - Monthly school board meetings
 - Various stakeholders complete surveys to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the school
 - Supplemental materials broaden lesson plans
 - Administration continuously reviews policies and procedures with the faculty
 - Mission statement and beliefs posted in each classroom
 - New teachers attend two-day orientation process and assigned a mentor to help them function properly at Faith Christian School
 - Guest speakers welcome at Faith Christian School
-
- Teachers, parents, students, grandparents, school board members, church members and alumni

encouraged to be a part of the school improvement planning meetings

- School board and administrators function very well together
- School website used to provide the parents, students, faculty and community with up-to-date school information
- School calendar kept current and posted in the office and distributed each month to the faculty
- Leadership teams established to provide guidance in all areas of the school
- Consistent communication (emails, monthly newsletter, weekly letters from elementary teachers, conferences, phone calls, etc.) keep all stakeholders aware of school activities

Artifacts:

- Teacher in-service records
- School Improvement Plan
- Standardized test scores
- Teacher evaluation forms
- Records of curriculum review
- Mission statement
- Minutes of school board meetings
- Parent, teacher and student surveys
- Alabama Course of Study
- Teacher handbook
- Parent/Student handbook
- Paw Print
- School website
- School calendar
- Edline records

Overall Assessment:

Operational: The school implements a collaborative and ongoing process for improvement that aligns most functions of the school with the expectations for student learning. Improvement efforts are sustained and the school demonstrates progress in improving student performance and school effectiveness. New improvement efforts are informed by the results of earlier efforts through reflection and assessment of the improvement process. The preponderance of the evidence supports an overall assessment of "operational" and is substantiated in the responses to the Indicators Rubric.

Conclusion

The following focus questions reflect the school's overall analysis of its internal evaluation of the accreditation standards.

Focus Questions

As you review your responses to the standards, what major trends, themes, or areas of focus emerge that cut across the seven standards?

The leadership of Faith Christian School communicates well with stakeholders and involves faculty, parents, and students in decision making processes when applicable. The mission statement and beliefs guide policies and daily activities of the school. We continue to assess our strengths and weaknesses and make changes as indicated by our data. Our faculty embraces curriculum changes if they are based on methods that have been proven successful.

Based on your review of these cross-cutting themes/trends and each of the seven standards, what would you consider to be your school's greatest strengths?

Faith Christian School provides a safe and productive learning environment. We have high standards of excellence for faculty and students, as evidenced by our assessment results. We have supportive and consistent leadership through the school's governing authority and administration, which keeps our mission and beliefs at the forefront of all that we do. We do a good job of communicating with stakeholders, especially parents, in regards to students' academic progress.

What would you consider to be your school's greatest challenges?

Our facilities need to be enlarged so that teachers do not have to share classrooms with each other. More space would also provide adequate areas for our computer lab, library, choir room, and administrative offices. Teacher salaries and benefits packages need to be increased. Funds are needed to keep Faith Christian School functioning with modern technology in computer and science labs as well as in all classrooms. Academically, an area of need is to increase our students' higher level critical thinking and problem solving skills, especially in mathematics.

How will you use the insights gained from this self-assessment to inform and enhance your quality assurance and continuous improvement efforts?

Our self-study has shown that we need to improve how we monitor our areas of weakness with the intention of filling identified gaps by reassessing instruction and current teaching skills to meet the needs of FCS students. While we want to excel in all areas of academics, currently, we intend to apply this approach specifically in the areas of math and writing skills. We also want to have school-wide consistency by improving and utilizing technology in academics, school operation and parent communication. By continuing to maintain and evaluate our curriculum using specific and longitudinal data, which has tended to breathe new life in this faculty, we will strive to improve Faith Christian School.