



# **Eligibility Criteria & Standards for Accreditation**

## Eligibility Criteria

### Leadership

Std. 1: Mission and Philosophy

Std. 2: Governance

Std. 3: Administration

### Student Experience/Program

Std. 4: Curriculum, Pedagogy, and Student Life

Std. 5: Student Well-Being

Std. 6: Program Resources

Std. 7: Residential, Homestay, and Exchange Programs (*if applicable*)

### Institutional Advancement & Operations

Std. 8: Enrollment Management and Outreach

Std. 9: Community Engagement and Partnerships

Std. 10: Development

Std. 11: Staffing and Human Resources

Std. 12: Finance

Std. 13: Facilities

Std. 14: Safety and Risk Management

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## ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

*AISNE-accredited schools and candidates for AISNE accreditation must comply with these eligibility criteria at all times in order to achieve and maintain full accreditation status.*

### **The School:**

1. Has a clear statement of mission and philosophy.
2. Serves one or more grades within the elementary, middle, and / or high school divisions. (Grades 1 – Post-Graduate)
3. Is incorporated as a not-for-profit organization as attested by federal and state records.
4. Has a non-discrimination statement as required by law.
5. Is governed by an appropriately constituted and substantially independent governing board, in accordance with the by-laws of the corporation.
6. Has policies and procedures to ensure that any perceived or actual conflicts of interest for board members are disclosed and managed appropriately.
7. Has an annual audit of the school's financial statements, performed by an independent certified public accountant.
8. Has a process for the ongoing monitoring of its compliance with all federal, state, and local legal and regulatory requirements.

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## STANDARDS FOR ACCREDITATION – LEADERSHIP

### **Standard 1: Mission and Philosophy**

*The school's stated mission and philosophy guide all aspects of its operation and program.*

**Indicator 1:** The school periodically reviews its mission and philosophy.

**Indicator 2:** The school continuously examines and assesses how it is achieving its mission and philosophy.

**Indicator 3:** The school's curriculum and teaching methods advance its mission and philosophy.

**Indicator 4:** The School articulates to its community how diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) are reflected in the mission and philosophy of the school.

**Indicator 5:** As a core part of its mission, the school values the quality of life of all members of its community and takes actions to create a safe, inclusive, equitable, and just environment.

### **Standard 2: Governance**

*The school's board and leadership operate in a collaborative partnership that provides effective oversight, strategic vision, and resource development to sustain and promote the school's mission and philosophy.*

**Indicator 1:** The school's articles of incorporation and by-laws articulate its institutional leadership structure and are in alignment with both best practice and legal requirements.

**Indicator 2:** The governing board's membership and committee structures advance the school's mission and vision, and provide fiduciary oversight in order to ensure both the stability and sustainability of the school.

**Indicator 3:** The governing board recognizes its role as a strategic, policy-setting body.

**Indicator 4:** The governing board engages in strategic, long-range financial planning.

**Indicator 5:** The governing board establishes policies that advance diversity, equity, and inclusion and ensures that these policies are reflected in both the make-up of the board and its decision-making process.

**Indicator 6:** The governing board conducts board development, including annual new trustee orientation, ongoing trustee education, board evaluation and self-evaluation, and board leadership succession planning.

**Indicator 7:** The governing board delegates authority to the Head of School for school operations while also providing appropriate support.

**Indicator 8:** The governing board hires and enters into a written contract with the Head of School and regularly evaluates the head's performance through a mutually agreed upon procedure.

**Indicator 9:** The governing board contributes to the advancement work of the school, including financial support and active involvement in annual and capital fundraising.

**Standard 3: Administration**

*The school's administration implements and manages the educational program and school operations in accordance with its mission and philosophy.*

**Indicator 1:** The school has an effective administrative structure to manage the essential areas of school leadership and meet the strategic needs of the school.

**Indicator 2:** The school's administration works to establish and implement policies that reflect its commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, and to ensure that these values are reflected in decision making.

**Indicator 3:** The school's strategic plan and goals provide annual direction for the administration.

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## STANDARDS FOR ACCREDITATION – STUDENT EXPERIENCE / PROGRAM

### **Standard 4: Curriculum, Pedagogy, and Student Life**

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*The school provides a mission-driven educational program that promotes learning and personal growth.*

**Indicator 1:** The school has a systematic and collaborative process by which faculty and administration document, review, evaluate, and revise the educational program.

**Indicator 2:** The school’s curriculum and teaching practices are supported by current research and developmentally-appropriate practices.

**Indicator 3:** The school’s teaching practices, curriculum, and co-curriculum reflect a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

**Indicator 4:** The content and design of the educational program enable students to develop skills to navigate a complex future.

**Indicator 5:** The school effectively assesses students and communicates their progress to families.

**Indicator 6:** The school's extracurricular and co-curricular programs support and advance its mission and philosophy.

### **Standard 5: Student Well-Being**

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*The school fosters physical, emotional, and mental health, safety, and well-being through its programs and services.*

**Indicator 1:** The school provides regular, age-appropriate programs for students that address physical and emotional well-being and healthy lifestyles.

**Indicator 2:** The school’s program content, teaching methods, and assessment practices meet student developmental needs and abilities.

**Indicator 3:** The school recognizes differences within the student body -- including gender, ability/disability, race, age, ethnicity, family background, family structure, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, and religious practice -- and understands how aspects of student identity impact well-being.

**Indicator 4:** The school’s dining facilities, staff, and menu support the health and well-being of students.

**Indicator 5:** The school has systems to provide appropriate support for students experiencing mental health issues.

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**Standard 6: Program Resources**

*The school has the resources and services necessary to meet student needs and support the delivery of the educational program in a manner consistent with its mission.*

**Indicator 1:** The school's educational resources are sufficient to support the program.

**Indicator 2:** Learning services and support programs meet the needs of all students, consistent with the school's mission and educational program.

**Indicator 3:** The school provides next-school counseling that meets the needs of students and families.

**Standard 7: (If Applicable) Residential, Homestay, and Exchange Programs:**

*The school's residential, homestay, and/or exchange programs provide a caring, thoughtfully planned, and mission-consistent experience for students.*

**Indicator 1:** The residential program is well-defined and congruent with the mission of the school, and is implemented to provide a healthy, balanced, and enriching experience for students.

**Indicator 2:** The residential, homestay, and exchange programs are integrated into the life of the school and provide positive and meaningful connections between residential, exchange, and day students, fostered by their shared experiences of school life.

**Indicator 3:** The residential, homestay, and exchange programs have defined educational goals and objectives.

**Indicator 4:** Thoughtful programming and activities for students after class hours and on weekends are mission-driven, with a clear rationale based on the school's priorities for students' social development.

**Indicator 5:** Comprehensive, well-developed residential, homestay, and/or exchange policies are consistently applied and regularly reviewed.

**Indicator 6:** Residential staff and/or homestay host families have clearly articulated responsibilities and are trained based on specific goals for the residential student experience.

**Indicator 7:** The school has a clearly-defined and implemented program for the regular supervision and evaluation of residential staff and/or homestay host families that takes into account the care of international and boarding students.

**Indicator 8:** The school allocates adequate resources to meet the needs of residential, homestay, and exchange students.

**Indicator 9:** (If applicable) The school has a formal, written agreement for homestay students, their guardians, and host families that defines expectations and addresses health, safety, and well-being.

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## STANDARDS FOR ACCREDITATION – INSTITUTIONAL ADVANCEMENT & OPERATIONS

### **Standard 8: Enrollment Management and Outreach**

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*The school's enrollment management program is designed and operated with sufficient resources to support the school's mission and educational program.*

**Indicator 1:** The school clearly defines the range and type of students appropriate for admission and has a delineated process to screen, admit, and enroll students.

**Indicator 2:** The school consistently follows policies and procedures regarding admission, including scholarship (if applicable) and financial aid (if applicable), that promote the school's goals related to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

**Indicator 3:** The school understands the most significant enrollment variables and trends that drive its ability to meet its income goals and plans accordingly.

**Indicator 4:** The school has the organizational structure, resources, and staffing to carry out its admission efforts.

**Indicator 5:** The school has an external marketing program with sufficient staff and resources to execute its goals.

### **Standard 9: Community Engagement and Partnerships**

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*The school engages in clear and proactive communication with its constituents and is actively involved in its community.*

**Indicator 1:** The school communicates clear, substantive, and timely information to families concerning the educational program and school procedures.

**Indicator 2:** The school engages proactively with families and is mindful of the ways in which families may be affected differently by school policies and programs.

**Indicator 3:** The administration ensures that communication channels are available to students, families, faculty, and staff to offer suggestions and voice concerns.

**Indicator 4:** The school cultivates a partnership with families.

**Indicator 5:** The school fosters and maintains a positive relationship with the local community.



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**Standard 10: Development**

*The school's fundraising program supports the mission and educational program of the school and contributes to the school's financial health.*

**Indicator 1:** The administration and governing board have identified and articulated the school's long- and short-term institutional development needs.

**Indicator 2:** The school has the organizational structure, resources, and staffing to carry out its fundraising efforts.

**Indicator 3:** The school has an engagement strategy that addresses a variety of constituent groups.

**Standard 11: Staffing and Human Resources**

*The school recruits and retains employees who are well-qualified for their positions, are supported through supervision, evaluation, and professional development, and are sufficient in number to support the school's mission.*

**Indicator 1:** Employees are qualified for their specific responsibilities by training, education, and experience.

**Indicator 2:** The staffing model is sufficient to fulfill the school's mission and educational program.

**Indicator 3:** The school's employment practices are clear and consistent, and are implemented in a manner that avoids bias.

**Indicator 4:** The school provides its employees with clear, written employment policies and ensures that those policies are implemented equitably.

**Indicator 5:** Personnel practices provide equitable treatment among work groups with respect to compensation, workloads, and working conditions.

**Indicator 6:** The school attends to the well-being of employees and has systems and resources to support their emotional and physical health.

**Indicator 7:** Board and school leadership regularly review and adjust employees' compensation in order to attract and retain a well-qualified staff.

**Indicator 8:** The school has a clearly-defined and consistently implemented program for the regular supervision and evaluation of employee performance.

**Indicator 9:** All faculty, administrators, and staff participate in a clearly-defined program for professional growth.

**Indicator 10:** *(If Applicable)* The school's Intern/Apprentice Teaching Program is formally defined, structured, resourced, and implemented and supports the school's mission and philosophy and the growth of new teachers.

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**Standard 12: Finance**

*The school practices effective financial management, and its financial operations, resources, planning, and oversight are adequate to support the school's mission and sustain its long-term viability and stability.*

**Indicator 1:** The administration implements sound fiscal practices and procedures, including the development of a board-approved annual operating and capital budget, multi-year budget projections, appropriate controls, and the execution of an annual audit.

**Indicator 2:** The board and administration work collaboratively and strategically to ensure the development and implementation of appropriate policies, practices, and processes for the sustainable, long-term financial management of the school.

**Indicator 3:** The board and administration engage in periodic benchmarking to assess factors that could impact the school's financial health.

**Indicator 4:** The board, in partnership with the administration, regularly considers the best use and management of endowment and reserve funds.

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**Standard 13: Facilities**

*The school's facilities support the mission and educational program of the school and are maintained in a manner that is sustainable and responsive to changing needs.*

**Indicator 1:** The school's facilities support and enhance the school's ability to implement its educational program and services consistent with the mission.

**Indicator 2:** The school's facilities are safe and welcoming to students and adults.

**Indicator 3:** The school's policies and decisions support environmental sustainability, and the school makes ongoing efforts to mitigate its environmental impact.

**Indicator 4:** The school is attentive to current and future maintenance of its facilities by creating and implementing plans in support of the mission and educational program.

**Indicator 5:** The school engages in long-range facilities planning that addresses campus maintenance, improvement, or expansion; is incorporated into the school's strategic and long-range financial plans; and is reviewed on a regular basis.

**Indicator 6:** *(If Applicable)* The school undergoes periodic independent safety review of outdoor education, experiential education, or wilderness equipment.

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**Standard 14: Safety and Risk Management**

*The school implements policies and procedures that promote a safe and healthy school environment consistent with its mission and has a comprehensive approach to risk management.*

**Indicator 1:** The school's health care services are administered and implemented by personnel whose training and experience are appropriate for the services offered and compliant with applicable regulations.

**Indicator 2:** The school's health services are adequate to meet the needs of its students and support the prevention of illness and injury.

**Indicator 3:** The school thoroughly and regularly trains all personnel in the legal requirements of mandated reporting and fosters a culture of appropriate emotional and physical boundaries between students and employees.

**Indicator 4:** The school ensures that all employees who supervise students have undergone thorough background and reference checks as mandated by state law.

**Indicator 5:** The school has a reporting procedure in place to respond to and document incidents regarding health and safety of students and employees.

**Indicator 6:** The school has a formal process for regularly reviewing and evaluating exposure, risk, and coverage.

**Indicator 7:** The school has comprehensive, written security and crisis management plans that are followed by employees.

**Indicator 8:** The school maintains appropriate adult-student supervision during school hours and all school-sponsored student activities and programs.

**Indicator 9:** The school ensures student and adult safety during on- and off-campus activities.

**Indicator 10:** The school's recordkeeping policy guides the maintenance of accurate, adequate, and secure records for current and former students and employees.

**Indicator 11:** The School has a process for the ongoing monitoring of compliance with all federal, state, and local legal and regulatory requirements.