

School Name _____

AIMS Accreditation Standards

The Committee chair should place a 'P' beside each Passed standard; an 'NP' beside each standard that is Not Passed; or a 'PM' beside each standard that Passed with a Mandate.

General

- _____ 1.1 The School has a mission statement. This statement is based on sound educational principles.*
- _____ 1.2 There is a high degree of congruence between the stated mission of the School and the actual educational program of the School.
- _____ 1.3 The School strives for excellence in its educational program, learning, and teaching.
- _____ 1.4 The School follows the AIMS Principles of Good Practice. (See AIMS Website under *Policy and Advisory Statements*).
- _____ 1.5 The School has a statement of nondiscrimination, in compliance with applicable laws, in its brochures and catalogues as well as in its charter, by-laws, or other governing instrument.*
- _____ 1.6 The School is a member in good standing of the Association of Independent Maryland & DC Schools.*
- _____ 1.7 The School's AIMS written self-study report is produced by an appropriately inclusive process; is thoughtful, comprehensive, and transparent; and the quality of the report demonstrates the School's significant engagement in the process.

Governance

- _____ 2.1 The School, or its parent organization, is incorporated as a not-for-profit organization and has been granted by the Internal Revenue Service 501 (C) (3) status or an equivalent form of tax exempt status.*
- _____ 2.2 The School is sufficiently independent in governance, teaching and learning, and financial management, to ensure the fulfillment of its mission.¹

* Standards marked with an * are considered Foundational Standards.

¹ To assess compliance with this standard, AIMS looks at both formal and functional indicators. Formal indicators include written documentation, including by-laws and other governing documents. Functional indicators include long-established organizational practices that establish independence in fact, if not in writing.

- _____ 2.3 The Board of Trustees (Governors, Directors) develops major school policies, oversees financial management, thinks and plans strategically, and employs, supports and annually evaluates the Head of School.
- _____ 2.4 The Board provides a written contract for the Head of School, which sets forth major responsibilities, the general plan for the Head’s evaluation, salary and benefits, the term of employment, and the required termination notice.*
- _____ 2.5 Trustees demonstrate appropriate and effective boundaries between the policy-making role of the Board and the role of the Head of School as the manager of the day-to-day operations.
- _____ 2.6 The Board periodically reviews and approves the School’s mission statement.*
- _____ 2.7 There is a long-range or strategic plan, which is annually reviewed and appropriately updated through a process that includes a review of relevant research and trends, and strategic challenges and opportunities.
- _____ 2.8 The Board provides the resources necessary to assure a high-quality educational program and the adequacy of plant facilities.
- _____ 2.9 The Board’s policies and procedures are clearly identified, stated in writing, and organized in a usable manner, filed at the School, and disseminated to those affected.*
- _____ 2.10 The Board provides orientation for its new members and supports a process for the evaluation of its own organization and effectiveness.*
- _____ 2.11 The Board develops policies, within the context of the School’s mission, to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion, including gender, economic and racial equality, in its governance and administration, admissions, staffing and educational programs.

School and Community

- _____ 3.1 The School’s culture is highly congruent with its stated mission.
- _____ 3.2 The composition of the School’s student body closely reflects its mission statement.
- _____ 3.3 The School clearly and effectively communicates to its parents its mission, school climate and culture, and admission and financial assistance standards, policies and practices.

Teaching & Learning

- _____ 4.1 The School day and school year are carefully planned and are of sufficient duration to provide for the total educational program of the School.

- _____ 4.2 The educational program adequately provides for the individual capabilities, learning styles, and significant needs of the students currently enrolled in the School.
- _____ 4.3 The School encourages freedom of inquiry and the teaching of critical reasoning and independent thinking, fostering a multicultural understanding of global citizenship.
- _____ 4.4 The School’s pedagogy is highly congruent with its stated mission.
- _____ 4.5 The School’s educational program is highly congruent with the School’s stated mission.
- _____ 4.6 The School provides evidence of a thoughtful process, respectful of its mission, for the collection and use in school decision-making of data (internal and external) about student learning. There is also evidence of a thoughtful assessment of individual student progress consistent with the School’s mission.
- _____ 4.7 The faculty and administration engage in ongoing professional growth and stays informed about research and trends relevant to pedagogy, curriculum planning and development, and the needs of students currently enrolled in the School.
- _____ 4.8 The administration is responsible for all policies affecting programs, personnel, and facilities.
- _____ 4.9 There is an understood written policy for the regular evaluation of faculty and administration.
- _____ 4.10 The written evaluation policy is routinely and effectively implemented.
- _____ 4.11 The School has an understood and effective professional development program.

School Climate (Edition 7.0 only)

- _____ 5.1 The School’s climate is highly congruent with its stated mission.
- _____ 5.2 The School has in place and routinely and consistently implements policies and procedures regarding harassment, sexual abuse, and bullying awareness and prevention, including employee education and training.

Boarding and Homestay

- _____ 6.1 The School’s boarding and/ or homestay program(s) meet(s) the needs of its students and is highly congruent with its stated mission.

Counseling

- _____ 7.1 The School provides an appropriate counseling program that includes academic, social, and emotional counseling, and future educational placement.

- _____ 7.2 Rules, regulations, and discipline for students are clearly stated and highly congruent with its stated mission.*
- _____ 7.3 The policies and practices for student behavior and discipline conform to a reasonable standard of fairness and review.

Personnel

- _____ 8.1 The administration is organized in a manner enabling it to effectively implement the policies of the Board.
- _____ 8.2 The administration initiates adequate procedures for review of the School's organization, administration, facilities, and the determination of short- and long-range goals.
- _____ 8.3 Each member of the faculty and staff is clearly informed of his/her compensation, term of employment, and principle responsibilities.*
- _____ 8.4 There is an understood policy for the non-renewal and termination of employment.
- _____ 8.5 The School has fair and appropriate personnel policies, salaries, and benefits for faculty and staff.
- _____ 8.6 The ratio of students to teachers is consistent with the School's stated mission, educational program, and strategic objectives.
- _____ 8.7 The School conducts thorough reference and background checks for all employees before the first day of employment in compliance with all applicable local laws and regulations, including the provisions of MD HB 486.²

Health

- _____ 10.1 The School provides appropriate and effective health services to its students.
- _____ 10.2 The School is in compliance with all applicable laws governing the distribution of student medications.
- _____ 10.3 School personnel stay informed about, and implement, as appropriate, policies and procedures based upon, the latest research regarding student health issues.

Financial Management

- _____ 11.1 The School demonstrates the institutional capacity and resources necessary to remain financially viable for a minimum period of three years.

² Maryland House Bill 486 applies only to Maryland schools.

- _____ 11.2 There are appropriate procedures and resources for management of the School's finances including budget making, accounting and control, and strategic thinking and planning.
- _____ 11.3 The School clearly states its tuition and fee structure and it has a written policy for refunds.
- _____ 11.4 The School maintains adequate property and liability insurance.*
- _____ 11.5 The School undergoes an annual audit by an independent auditing firm in compliance with GAAP standards.

Admission

- _____ 11.6 The School's admission and financial assistance policies and practices are effective and consistent with the School's mission statement.

Institutional Advancement

- _____ 11.7 The School has an effective development, public relations and marketing program to further its program and objectives.

Financial Sustainability

- _____ 11.8 Administrators responsible for admission, financial aid, marketing, finance, and advancement stay informed about research and trends relevant to their areas of responsibility.

Plant, Institutional Technology, Safety, and Transportation

- _____ 12.1 The School's facilities are well maintained and consistent with its stated mission.
- _____ 12.2 The School has in place and routinely and consistently implements policies and procedures for the safety of students and faculty.
- _____ 12.3 The School has in place and routinely and consistently implements policies and procedures to protect all electronic personal identity.

Name of School _____

Signed (Committee Chair) _____ Date _____



Local Standards for Schools in Maryland

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COMAR 13A.09.09

.01. Purpose and Scope

_____ B&C A school has been issued a Certificate of Approval (or an exemption, if a religious school).

.03. Certificate of Approval

_____ D A school shall operate in a manner which is consistent with the specifications as recorded on the Certificate of Approval.

_____ E The school shall post the Certificate of Approval in a conspicuous place on the premises to which it applies.

.04. Compliance

_____ C The school shall certify the status of the compliance of the school with this chapter (.04) by submitting the completed annual report provided by the Department.

_____ H A school shall certify on the form provided by the Department that it does not practice discrimination based upon race, color, or national origin.

_____ I A school shall certify that it is in compliance with the requirements for a criminal background check as specified in Family Law Article, Title 5, and Education Article 2-206.1, Annotated Code of Maryland, and the provisions of HB-486.

_____ J A school shall certify that it is in compliance with the requirements for reporting suspected child abuse as specified in Family Law Article, Title 5, Annotated Code of Maryland.

.05 Statement of Purposes

_____ A school shall have a written statement of its purposes, which shall be given annually to the parent(s), or legal guardian(s) of the students enrolled.

.06. Personnel Requirements

_____ A.1 A school shall have an administrative head who is responsible for the day-to-day administration of the school.

_____ A.2 An administrative head hired after June 1, 2004, at a minimum shall meet the standards established in (06.B.2.a)

_____ A.3 A school shall have a written position description that states the duties and responsibilities of the administrative head of the school.

_____ A.4 The administrative head of a school shall have sufficient time during each school day to carry out the duties and responsibilities in the written position description.

_____ B.2.a A teacher who provides instruction in English language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, courses for which secondary school credit is granted, and Montessori areas of instruction shall hold, at a minimum one of the following credentials:
(i) a bachelor's degree from an IHE;
(ii) 120 semester hours of college credit from an IHE; or
(iii) a bachelor's degree equivalent as determined by an independent agency authorized to evaluate foreign credentials that is designated by the Department.

_____ B.2.b A teacher in a Montessori school shall also hold a Montessori teacher credential appropriate for the level of assignment.

_____ C.2 A school shall give annually to the parents or legal guardians of prospective and enrolled students its written statement of the qualifications of each teacher who implements the educational program.

.07. Educational Program

_____ A.1 The educational program of a school shall operate consistently with its statement of purposes.

_____ A.2 A school shall maintain at the school a written curriculum of its educational program for the following areas of instruction: English, language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies for kindergarten and each grade; secondary school courses for which credit is issued; and Montessori areas of instruction.

- _____ B A school shall maintain at the school instructional materials and equipment required to implement the written curriculum of the school. A school shall own the instructional materials and equipment required to implement the curriculum.
- _____ C A school shall maintain at the school and own a library media collection to support and supplement the implementation of the written curriculum.
- _____ D A school shall have a written statement of its ratio of students to teachers or its average class size for the implementation of its educational program. This statement shall be given annually to parents or legal guardians of prospective and enrolled students.

.08. Student Records for Nursery Schools, Kindergartens, and Elementary Schools

- _____ B A school shall maintain a cumulative record for each student enrolled that includes the following:
 - (.1) School name;
 - (.2) Address;
 - (.3) Phone number;
 - (.4) Student's first, middle, and last names;
 - (.5) Student's date of birth;
 - (.6) Student's home address;
 - (.7) Month, day, and year the student initially entered;
 - (.8) Nursery school level or grade upon enrollment;
 - (.9) Month, day, and year the student withdrew;
 - (.10) Student's performance information in each curricular area;
 - (.11) Code for the meaning of performance information; and
 - (.12) Number of days in attendance in each school year.

.09. Requirements for Secondary Schools

- _____ A Beginning with the 2004-05 school year and thereafter, a student entering grade 9 shall earn a minimum of 21 credits for secondary school graduation.

Twelve credits shall be required as follows:

 - (.2.a) Four credits in English language arts;
 - (.2.b) Two credits in social studies to include at least one credit in United States History;
 - (.2.c) Six credits in science and mathematics to include at least two science credits and two mathematics credits.
 - (.3) Nine additional credits shall be earned in accordance with the school's written policy regarding graduation requirements.
- _____ B A secondary school shall have a written policy regarding the credits required for secondary school graduation. This policy shall be given to parents or legal guardians of the student enrolled.

- _____ C A secondary school shall have a written statement that defines a unit of credit. This statement shall be given to parents or legal guardians of the students enrolled.

- _____ D.1 A secondary school shall be prepared to present as a separate document a transcript of the secondary school record of each student for each year of enrollment that includes the following:
 - (.a) School name,
 - (.b) address,
 - (.c) phone number;
 - (.d) Student’s first, middle, and last names;
 - (.e) Student’s date of birth;
 - (.f) Student’s home address;
 - (.g) Credits and grades earned in each subject area;
 - (.h) Code for the meaning of the grading system;
 - (.i) Designation of transfer credits accepted by the secondary school and name of the school originally granting the credit;
 - (.j) Month, day, and year student initially entered;
 - (.k) grade upon enrollment;
 - (.l) Month, day, and year student withdrew or graduated; and
 - (.m) Number of days of attendance in each school year.

- _____ D.2 A secondary school shall maintain permanently the original or a legible copy of the secondary school transcript of each student who has been enrolled in the school.

- _____ E A secondary school’s diploma may not imply that the requirements for graduation from a Maryland public secondary school have been met.

.10. Administrative Practices

- _____ A.1 A school shall have a written schedule that states the beginning and end of the school day and the specific time periods during the school day when required areas of instruction are implemented.

- _____ A.2 A school shall give annually to parents or legal guardians of prospective and enrolled students the written schedule of its school day.

- _____ B.1 A school shall have a written calendar that states the specific days and the total number of days for the implementation of its educational program.

- _____ B.2 The calendar for a kindergarten, elementary school, or secondary school shall provide for at least 170 days for the implementation of the educational program.

- _____ B.3 When a student enrolls and annually thereafter, a school shall give its written school calendar to parents or legal guardians of each student.

- _____ B.4 A school shall include three to five additional school days, based on local weather patterns, in its school year calendar to ensure that the 170 day school year requirement is met.
- _____ C.2 A school shall have a written policy regarding the criteria for admission to the school, which shall be given to parents or legal guardians of prospective and enrolled students.
- _____ C.3.c A school may adopt policies and procedures permitting a 4-year old to be admitted to kindergarten, upon request by the parent or guardian, if the school determines that the child demonstrates capabilities warranting early admission.
- _____ D The public relations information of a school shall be accurate and may not be erroneous or misleading, either by actual statement, omission, or reasonable inference.

.11. Health, Fire and Safety, and Zoning

- _____ A.1 A school shall be in compliance with health, fire safety, and zoning regulations applicable to a nonpublic school.
- _____ A.2 A school shall obtain and maintain documentation verifying compliance with health, fire safety, and zoning regulations applicable to nonpublic schools.

Name of School _____

Signed (Head of School) _____ **Date** _____

Signed (Committee Chair) _____ **Date** _____