

School Name _____

AIMS Accreditation Standards

The Committee chair should place a 'P' beside each passed standard or a 'NP' beside each failed standard.

Schools may demonstrate compliance with standards shown with an asterisk () at the Design Conference, following completion of Phase One of the self-study; compliance with all other standards is evaluated by the Visiting Committee during its visit.*

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 adheres to the AIMS Principles of Good Practice. (See AIMS Website under *About Us / 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
- _____ 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, 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.

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.

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.
- _____ 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.

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.
- _____ 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 the District of Columbia

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SAFETY

- _____ 1. The school has been issued all certifications required of nonpublic schools by state and local government.
- _____ 2. The school complies with health, fire safety, and zoning regulations applicable to nonpublic schools.
- _____ 3. The school maintains documentation verifying compliance with health, fire safety, and zoning regulations applicable to nonpublic schools.
- _____ 4. The school provides evidence that it complies with the DC Human Rights Law, as applicable.
- _____ 5. The school conducts criminal background checks for all employees.
- _____ 6. The school has a procedure for reporting suspected child abuse.

PUBLIC TRUST

- _____ 7. The school has a mission statement, which is provided to parent(s) or legal guardian(s) of prospective and enrolled students.
- _____ 8. The school provides annually to the parents or legal guardians of prospective and enrolled students the educational background of all teachers.
- _____ 9. Public information provided by the school accurately reflects the school's mission and program.
- _____ 10. The school has a written policy clearly stating the requirements for admission to the school. This statement is provided to parents or legal guardians of prospective and enrolled students.

EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS

- _____ 11. 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: (i) a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university; or (ii) 120 semester hours of college credit from an accredited college or university; or (iii) experience that qualifies the person to provide quality instruction.
- _____ 12. A secondary school has a written policy regarding the credits required for secondary school graduation. This policy is provided to parents or legal guardians of enrolled students.
- _____ 13. A secondary school has a written statement that defines a unit of credit. This statement is provided to parents or legal guardians of enrolled students.
- _____ 14. The school maintains an academic calendar that provides at least 170 days for the implementation of the educational program. This calendar is provided annually to parents or legal guardians of enrolled students.

RECORDS

- _____ 15. The school maintains a cumulative record for each student enrolled that includes the following:
- (1) School name, address, and phone number;
 - (2) Student's first, middle, and last names;
 - (3) Student's date of birth;
 - (4) Student's home address;
 - (5) Month, day, and year the student initially entered;
 - (6) Nursery school level or grade upon enrollment;
 - (7) Month, day, and year the student withdrew; or graduated
 - (8) Number of days in attendance in each school year.
- _____ 16. The school maintains a record for each student's performance in every curricular area. A secondary school shall maintain permanently the secondary school transcript of each student who has been enrolled in the school.

Name of School _____

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

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