

Accreditation Program Guide

Member K12 Christian Schools

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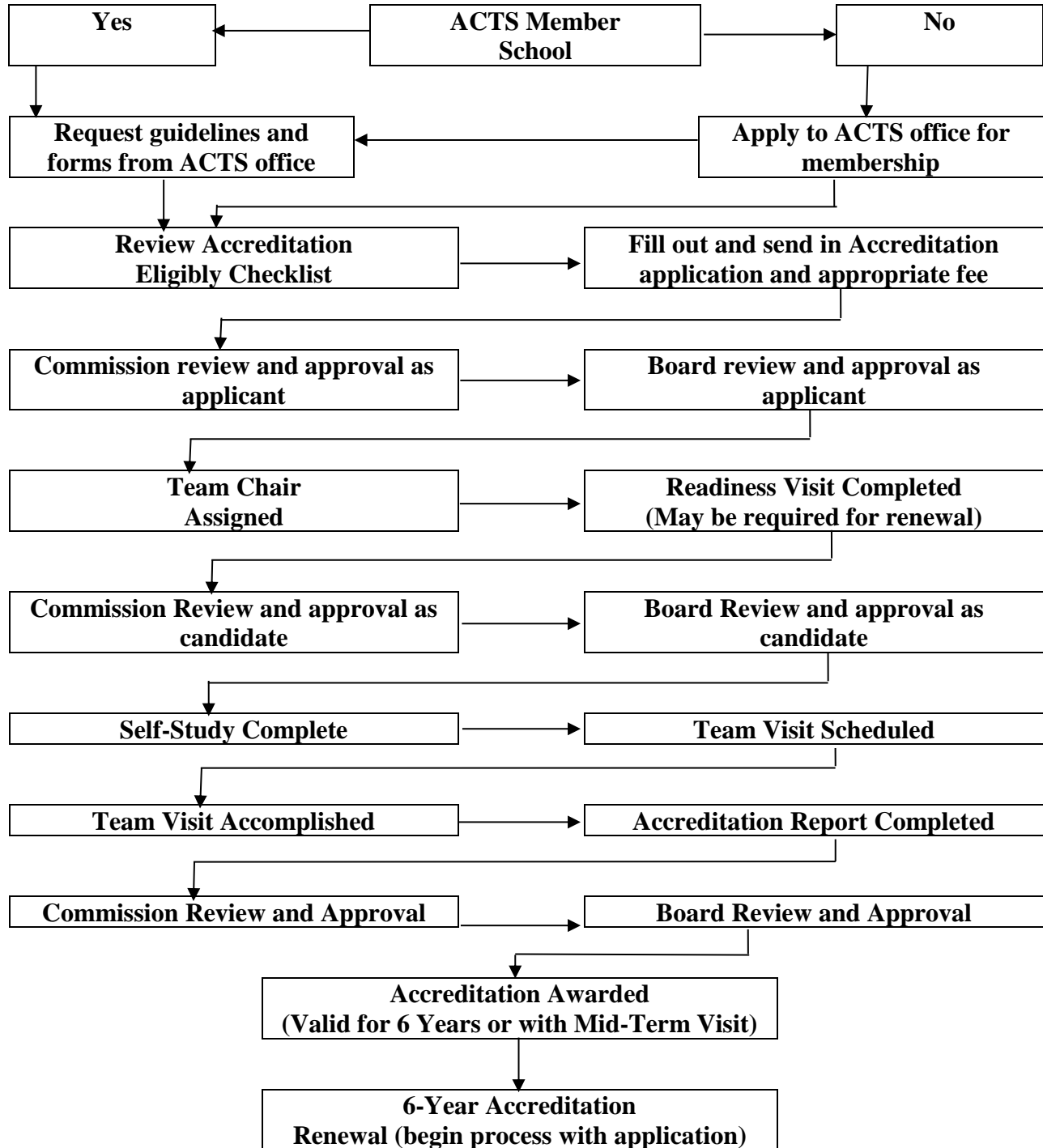
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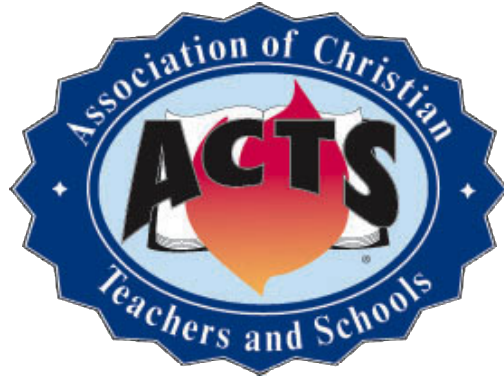
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ACTS Accreditation Process





Setting a New Standard of Christ-Centered Academic Excellence!

TABLE OF CONTENTS	Page
ACTS Vision and Mission _____	4
ACTS Non-Discrimination Statement _____	4
Accreditation Program _____	5
Procedure to Apply for Initial Six-Year Accreditation _____	6
Accreditation Eligibility Checklist _____	6
Visiting Team _____	7
Term of Accreditation _____	9
International Accreditation _____	10
Application Procedure for Accreditation and Accreditation Fees _____	10
Self-Study Accreditation Process Overview _____	11
Self-Study Process _____	12
School Actions _____	13
Accreditation Standards _____	14
Appendices _____	19
Accreditation Application _____	21
Continuous Accreditation Report _____	22

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ACTS Vision, Mission, Core Values, and Benefits

Vision

Setting a new standard of Christ-centered academic excellence

Mission

Assisting Christian schools to realize the highest level of educational credibility

Core Values

We are passionately committed to:

- A Biblical Worldview—modeling, teaching, and leading with actions and decisions that are consistent with God's Word
- Integrity—demonstrating exemplary practices reflective of Christian ethics; with accountability to Christ, our schools, and the educational community
- Excellence—providing exceptional services for the certification and development of Christian administrators and teachers, and pathways to the highest levels of accreditation for Christian schools
- Relationship—developing and sustaining a partnership with Christian Schools to enhance their ministry through personal connection
- Creativity—being proactive in the pursuit and development of innovative solutions to benefit the growth and development of our organization and its member schools
- Service—purposing to approach current and prospective members by offering resources, support, consulting, advice, and mentoring

ACTS does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, or national or ethnic origin in the administration of its programs.

ACCREDITATION PROGRAM

These guidelines are designed to guide member schools through the ACTS Accreditation Program. Information is provided to help you understand the set of standards and the evaluative process that is in place to help verify a member school's commitment to its constituency and others that it is carrying out its Christian purpose.

This manual will help schools complete the *Initial Accreditation Application* and prepare the self-study, file the *Continuous Accreditation Report*, and complete the *Six-Year Accreditation Renewal*.

The ACTS Accreditation Commission is the recognized accrediting body for member schools. The Commission is the representative body charged with carrying out the accreditation process.

The Chairperson of the Commission provides direction for the accreditation program. Final review of the accreditation program and policies is made by the Commission, which then makes Directives to the ACTS Board for final approval.

The Accreditation Program is designed to meet or exceed the minimum standards recognized by the major accrediting associations. It is important for all member schools to strive to be accredited. Only member schools may apply for accreditation. The initial process takes about one year. Accreditation is an ongoing process promoting excellence in Christian school education.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Accreditation Program is to establish high, uniform standards among ACTS member schools. Achievement of accreditation status represents a standard of excellence that is recognized by other institutions and the constituency of the community in which the school is located. Accreditation requirements identify educational and spiritual criteria which establish high expectations for Christian schools. Parent/Guardians seek accredited schools because they believe such schools offer a quality program. Likewise, the larger communities of business and higher education value the standard of excellence established by school accreditation.

To become accredited, a school will complete a self-study evaluation and open their school to an on-site visit by a qualified team of educators who will examine its program to determine whether it is being operated within the published guidelines of the accrediting agency. ACTS standards are recognized by Regional Accrediting Agencies and are designed to meet or exceed the standards for those accrediting associations. ACTS Standards are recognized by NCPSA (National Council for Private Schools Accreditation) and state agencies of non-public education (TEPSAC, OPSAC, FAANS and VCPE).

LEVELS OF ACCREDITATION

In the accreditation process, a school progresses from Applicant to Candidacy to Accreditation. A school may remain in Applicant status or Candidacy status for a maximum of two years after being accepted by the Commission. If significant progress is not made toward accreditation within this two-year time frame, a school will be dropped from the accreditation process. At the end of this two-year time frame, a school must submit a new application and pay an additional \$650 application fee.

Applicant Status: A school is in Applicant status from the time an official application is filed with the ACTS Office until all items have been received and accepted by the Commission. A school at this stage of accreditation may only refer to themselves as being an Applicant with ACTS.

Candidacy Status: Once a school's preliminary visit has been completed and the accompanying documentation have been received and accepted by the Commission, the school will be advanced to Candidacy status and assigned a chairperson as an advisor. After the school receives their formal notice that their preliminary visit report has been accepted, they may refer to themselves as having Candidacy status with ACTS.

Accreditation: Upon completion of the on-site visit, the Visiting Team will submit a report and recommendation to the Commission. The Commission then makes a status report to the Board. Accreditation may be granted by the Board for a maximum of six years. A school may refer to themselves as Accredited by ACTS upon receipt of the notice of approval by the Board.

Revocation of Accreditation: A school may be dropped from accreditation for failing to maintain compliance with the standards or for failing to file a Continuous Accreditation Report. A school must first be notified by the Executive Director, by certified mail, of the reasons for the pending revocation. A school so notified has the right to a hearing before the Board. The decision of the Board shall be final. The school will be notified of board action by certified mail. Upon receipt of said notification, the school must immediately stop referring to itself as an ACTS accredited school. (See page 10 for Appeal and Complaint Procedures.)

PROCEDURE TO APPLY FOR INITIALSIX-YEAR ACCREDITATION

A school wishing to become accredited may contact ACTS Office, 911 S. Parsons Ave., Suite G, Brandon, FL 33511, or phone (813) 684-2024 to request the accreditation program information. Guidelines and forms will be forwarded to the school, or a school may download them from the ACTS website.

When a school seeking initial accreditation has its application processed and accepted by the Commission, a contact/chairperson is appointed to assist the school in understanding the accreditation guidelines and completing the forms for the self-evaluation study. After the forms have been filled out completely and returned, a chairperson and a Visiting committee will be appointed.

The following Accreditation Eligibility Checklist identifies areas that must be met for schools seeking accreditation.

ACCREDITATION ELIGIBILITY CHECKLIST

As soon as the school's accreditation application is accepted by the Commission, a chairperson will be assigned to make a preliminary visit to the school. The school should be prepared to demonstrate to the chairperson that the school meets all of the requirements in the Eligibility Checklist. The chairperson will make a written report to the Commission detailing how the school meets each of the eligibility criteria. This report will be attached to the school's application and the school will be given a copy. A school will not be considered for Candidacy by the Commission until this visit and report are completed. A school has a maximum of two years from the time an application is accepted to complete this visit and report. If this is not completed within two years, the school must file a new application, including fees, and begin the process again. The school is responsible for the travel expenses of the chairperson related to this visit.

The school:

1. Is a current member of ACTS.
2. Has legal authority to operate and must be able to address each of the following areas:
 - a. **Philosophy and Objectives:** Each accredited school shall be required to have a concise, clearly written statement of its philosophy and objectives in order to guide the academic program and the overall development of its students.
 - b. **Curriculum:** Each school shall have a curriculum consistent with its philosophy and objectives. This shall be designed to effectively fill the needs of the students enrolled. Curriculum offered shall be organized sequentially and described in current written curriculum guides and courses of study by subject and grade level.
 - c. **School Plant and Facilities:** The plant and equipment shall be suited to the purpose and adequate for the total program of each school. Evidence of conformity to local codes for school building and health, safety, and sanitation must be present.
 - d. **Faculty and Administrative Staff:** The school professional staff must meet criteria established by the accrediting body that are suitable to the program and mission of the school. The criteria must address the requirements of degrees and ACTS certification.
 - e. **School Calendar and Class Hours:** The school year shall have a minimum of 180 actual school days or a minimum of 170 actual school days and the hourly equivalent of 180 actual school days determined as prescribed below: (If the state requires an actual number of attendance days, the school must meet state requirements. International schools must meet local/national government requirements.)
 - a. Kindergarten: 540 net instructional hours
 - b. Grades 1-3: 720 net instructional hours
 - c. Grades 4-12: 900 net instructional hours

- f. Transfer of Student Records/Data: Standards shall insure the maintenance and safe-keeping of accurate student records and the provision of a transcript indicating work covered by students.
- g. Financial Records/Accounting: The financial resources and management of the school shall be such as to sustain an educational program consistent with its philosophy and objectives. Evidence of financial stability in the form of a financial statement shall be prepared annually and be available for review by the accreditation association during evaluations.
- h. Health and Safety: All schools shall meet all applicable local and state laws relating to fire protection, safety, sanitation, and health. Evidence of evacuation drills and emergency procedures are required. The school buildings shall comply with local and state zoning, structural, and fire codes.
- i. Non-Discrimination Policies: All schools must issue statements of nondiscrimination (in writing) stating that they do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin.
- j. State Laws and Regulations: Accreditation standards require each school to comply with all applicable state laws and regulations.

3. Is under control of a governing body, duly empowered with its governance, and meeting all state legal requirements. **Note:** Schools located in states that offer voucher/choice type programs that have been denied accreditation or participation in the voucher/choice program by any other organization or state action are not eligible for ACTS accreditation.

4. Is administered by a chief administrative officer designated for the school.

5. Has been in operation a minimum of one year. A Visiting Team On-Site Visit may not be accomplished prior to a school completing one full academic year.

6. Has written statements of purpose and faith that agrees with an approved ACTS Statement of Faith. (See Appendices.)

7. Offers Bible instruction at all grade levels.

8. Participates in normed standardized testing.

9. Has teaching faculty who demonstrate their professional expertise through one of the following criteria:

a. Has a baccalaureate degree from an accredited or recognized college and holds an ACTS teaching certificate or a provisional ACTS teaching certificate. **All ACTS teaching certificates must be issued prior to a Team Visit.**

b. Has a baccalaureate degree from an accredited or recognized college. The degree must be in the appropriate teaching area or a professional development plan must be on file showing current enrollment in an approved continuing education program leading toward specialization in the teaching area and ACTS professional certification.

c. Exceptions: Any exceptions must be presented in writing. Each region is unique and may have legitimate reasons for such exceptions. All written requests for exceptions, along with the Professional Development Plan, shall be forwarded to the Director of Accreditation.

NOTE: All school administrators are required to hold a bachelor's degree from a recognized college or university. The teaching faculty, full or part-time, must hold a bachelor's degree from a recognized college or university. An exception may be granted to a part-time teacher not teaching a core subject. However, this exception must be requested in writing to the ACTS Commission a minimum of 60 days prior to an accreditation team visit.

10. Must send a minimum of two representatives (Chief Administrator/Principal) to at least one ACTS conference each year.

11. Has a written School-Wide Improvement Plan containing goals, measurable objectives, a timeline for completion and stakeholders involved. The Plan must address the areas of: Curriculum & Instruction, School Staff, Facilities, Student Activities, Student Data Analysis, Directives from the previous Accreditation Report, and Self-identified areas of needed improvement. (Minimum six-year plan), which is approved by the governing board.

VISITING TEAM

The Visiting Team will consist of at least two or more people (based upon school enrollment) who have current education experience. Team qualifications are expected to be a school administrator/principal, a college level person with a master's degree (or higher), or a teacher with classroom experience. The Team Chairperson will guide the school through the accreditation process. Chairperson's responsibilities include the following:

1. Communication with the school administrator regarding ACTS accreditation standards.
2. Identification of areas needing improvement prior to the visit.
3. Setting a date for the Team's on-site visit. This should be a three-day visit.
4. Coordination of the Visiting Team's activities.
5. Responsibility for the final written report.

The Visiting Team members shall each receive an electronic copy of the self-study at least 30 days before the on-site visit. If the self-study is not received at least 30 days prior to the visit date, the team visit will be rescheduled (if this results in additional travel expenses the school is responsible to also cover them). All classes, programs, and records should be open to the team. Team members will talk with the pastor, board, administrator, teachers, staff, students and Parent/Guardians during the visit.

Preliminary results of the on-site visit will be shared with the administration at the end of the visit. Detailed results will be provided in the Accreditation Team Report after it has been processed through the Commission and Board.

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The primary purpose of the Visiting Team's visit as a part of the process of accreditation is to verify the school's self-study and to determine if it accurately reflects the school's programs and ministry. The Visiting Team serves a key role in the accreditation process and in the assessment and improvement of the school.

The objectives of the accreditation team visit include the following:

- a. Providing a final report for the ACTS Commission that addresses every aspect of a school's program, assuring that the school's self-study is objective and accurate and that it reflects the school strengths;
- b. Having a Visiting Team that brings objective expertise to the school to assist in conducting the verification. This provides insight that can lead to school improvement;
- c. Serving as a stimulus for reviewing and/or changing those areas of the school's operation that are not in compliance with ACTS Standards; and,
- d. Determining that the school has no violations of ACTS Standards.

VISITING TEAM CHAIRPERSON AND MEMBERS

The chairperson shall have served on a previous Visiting Team on-site visit and have experience as a school administrator, principal, assistant principal, or college education department director/faculty member. Workshops are provided at ACTS Conferences to train prospective team chairs and members.

The selection of the Visiting Team Chairperson is the responsibility of the Director of Accreditation and the Executive Director. The Director of Accreditation, with input from the office of the Executive Director, consults the school's administrator or principal concerning any input that he/she might have on the selection of a Visiting Team from a list of qualified persons. A list of qualified persons shall not include an individual deemed to have a conflict of interest, including but not limited to an employee of the applying institution, a relative or church member.

The Visiting Team will consist of a chairperson and at least one team member. Actual number of team members is determined by school enrollment. Additional team members may be added by the Director of Accreditation after consultation with the Executive Director, the Visiting Team chairperson, and other appropriate personnel, such as the school administrator or principal.

The final selection of the Visiting Team members is the responsibility of the Director of Accreditation with input from the Executive Director. When possible, the Visiting Team members are chosen from the same region or state in which the school to be visited is located.

The selected Visiting Team members are chosen to provide balance and competence to the evaluation. Their professional background and expertise shall include the areas of teaching, programs, curriculum, administration, finance, facilities, and community relations.

No Visiting Team Chairperson or members shall serve without receiving training in the ACTS Standards and accreditation process. This training is provided at all ACTS conferences and may be provided prior to the visit by the Team Chair.

The administrator/principal of the school to be visited will be given the names of the Visiting Team members by the Director of Accreditation at least 30 days before the visit.

Any changes in Visiting Team members or dates of the visit must be made with the Director of Accreditation through the office of the Executive Director. No one shall be contacted for participation on a team by the administrator/principal of the school.

VISITING TEAM CHAIRPERSON AND MEMBERS EXPENSES

All Visiting Team member expenses (lodging, meals, travel) incurred during the visit are to be borne by the school being visited. When possible, the school should make arrangements to pay directly to the motel/hotel the meals/lodging costs incurred by the Visiting Team. The mileage for travel while on business for ACTS is the current rate allowed by the Internal Revenue Service. Other possible travel costs include parking, taxi, tolls, travel other than by automobile, etc. Any costs for meals incurred by a Visiting Team member in route and any costs for meals during the visitation should be reimbursed by the school. All expenses should be indicated on the expense form. The expense form should be submitted directly to the administrator/principal of the school visited for reimbursement. The checks will be issued by the school upon completion of the visit.

TERM OF ACCREDITATION

Initial and sixth-year re-evaluation accreditation is for a maximum term of six years. When a school is accredited, no matter the date, their accreditation expiration date will be **June 30th** of the sixth year following their initial or sixth-year re-evaluation accreditation. (NOTE: Maximum term for schools in NM & VA is five years.)

CONTINUOUS ACCREDITATION REPORT FOR ALL ACCREDITED SCHOOLS

All accredited schools are required to submit a completed annual report by September 1 each year along with the annual accreditation renewal fee of \$500.00. (See Appendix 5 for Form.)

PROCEDURE TO APPLY FOR SIXTH-YEAR RE-EVALUATION ACCREDITATION

A school planning to apply for sixth-year re-evaluation accreditation must complete the application for sixth year re-evaluation accreditation and a new self-study (**The Self-Study is to be in a digital format saved on a USB flash drive**) and return it to the ACTS office. An on-site team visit will be made using the same procedures as in the initial accreditation visit (See pages 7-9).

CROSS-ORGANIZATIONAL ACCREDITATION TRANSFER

A school that is currently accredited by any recognized Accreditation Organization may transfer their current accreditation to ACTS with no interruption of their accredited status by completing the following process:

1. Join ACTS.
2. Have their standing within the other organization validated.
3. Submit a complete application for accreditation along with the current accreditation fee.
4. Upon acceptance, submit the school's most current self-study instrument along with the latest team visit report to a designated Team Chair for review.
5. The school must host an on-site visit by the Team Chair.
6. The Team Chair will write and send a report of the visit to the ACTS Commission and Board for accreditation confirmation.
7. All confirmed accreditation transfers will be valid for the school's current accreditation time frame.

INTERNATIONAL ACCREDITATION

These guidelines are also designed to guide ACTS member schools located outside of the United States through the international accreditation process. To be considered an international school must meet the legal requirements of the jurisdiction and/or country in which they are located the same as other national/domestic schools.

The international accreditation process is designed to meet or exceed the minimum standards recognized for school accreditation. However, in some situations an international school may find that one or more standards are not possible because of objectives, structure, organizational limits from local government regulations, or programs of that particular school. While most of the standards are not negotiable and exceptions will not be granted often, in such situations the international school administration may appeal to the Commission requesting an exception.

Exceptions to multiple standards are not normally granted. For any exception to be considered, substantial and effective documentation must be submitted, proving that the exception is warranted and that the strengths of the entire school or any single part will not be undermined by granting an exception. No routine exceptions will be granted. All request for exceptions must follow the process describe below.

1. Exceptions to compliance with a standard, as much as is known and is practical, should be requested at the time of candidacy.
2. Any exception to the standards of accreditation must be presented in writing to the Commission a minimum of 60 days prior to an accreditation team visit for consideration.
3. The Commission, with consent of the Executive Director, will notify the head of the school of its final decision on all requests for exceptions.

APPEAL AND COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

Appeals and complaints are handled on a case by case approach. Each case is reviewed and action taken with the full involvement of the individuals, school, as well as members of the ACTS Commission.

The accreditation program process is designed to go forward only when a school meets the requirements for accreditation. It continues based on the school's annual report being submitted by September 1st each year and reviewed by the ACTS Commission. Schools are advised in writing by certified mail of any specific violations of standards. This advised status does not preclude continued accreditation unless violations are recurring and not corrected by the school. The school must respond by the next regular or special called board meeting.

A school's accreditation may be withdrawn only by action of the ACTS Commission. This action includes the process of a representative of the Commission visiting the school and submitting a review/report concerning the recurring and not corrected violations by the school. In cases when accreditation has had to be withheld or withdrawn, every effort is made to have an ongoing and open communication to correct the situation. All appeals from any decision made shall be submitted in writing to the ACTS Commission. An appeal should review specifically the appellant's position in regard to each item of the decision.

An appeal of an unfavorable decision concerning a school's accreditation status or complaint may be made to the Board at the next scheduled meeting after the decision was made. A school suspended or not accredited for failure to meet standards may be re-evaluated in the next year if efforts to rectify deficiencies are evident.

When complaints are filed those involved are encouraged, if possible, to resolve the complaints. If the school or person filing the complaint does not feel that it has been resolved, the Executive Director's office should be contacted for input and/or mediation. If necessary, the complaint will be referred to the Commission.

APPLICATION FOR INITIAL ACCREDITATION/SIXTH-YEAR RE-ACCREDITATION

In submitting this application to the ACTS office, you are asserting that you are a member in good standing and that you have carefully read the Accreditation Program Guidelines and that you are requesting to become involved or to continue involvement in the accreditation process of ACTS. Please return the Application for Accreditation Candidacy/Sixth-Year Re-Accreditation form with attachments to:

ACTS Director of Accreditation, 911 S. Parsons Ave., Suite G, Brandon, FL 33511

This application must be accompanied by:

1. A check for \$650 for the application fee payable to ACTS. The application fee is non-refundable.
2. A copy of the resolution appearing in the school board minutes which approves of the school seeking accreditation with ACTS (Initial accreditation only).
3. A written statement indicating that the school is responsible for the Visiting Team's expenses during the on-site visit.
4. An understanding that the school must meet certain accreditation guidelines (standards) in order to progress from Accreditation Candidacy to Accreditation.
5. An understanding that the Self-Study must be submitted to the ACTS national office and Visiting Team members at least 30 days prior to the scheduled committee visit.

SELF-STUDY ACCREDITATION PROCESS OVERVIEW

BACKGROUND

The accreditation process for ACTS resulted from intensive work of a collaborative group from the ACTS organization. The basic concepts addressed in this process focus upon student success in meeting the school wide learner outcomes [i.e., what each student should know, understand and be able to do upon exit (graduation) from the school or by the time the student completes the planned program].

Focus on Learning and School Change

To ensure that the critical elements of school change were integral to the design of this protocol, the following specific features are included:

- The clarification of the school's purpose and school wide learner outcomes for all students.
- The involvement of the school community in self-directed problem-solving.
- The analysis of the actual program for students.
- The planning for meaningful dialogue.
- The necessity of collaboration and shared decision-making.
- The use of high quality standards to analyze the program for students.
- The development of a School-Wide Improvement Plan to support desired learning results.
- The opportunity for an outside perspective regarding the proposed changes through the Visiting Team's dialogue and findings.
- The monitoring of progress in meeting or redefining goals and improvements through accreditation reviews and reports.

ACTS Accreditation Standards

The standards are research-based guidelines of systemic school improvement that address accreditation's central tenet: a school operates with a clear understanding of its purpose and focuses on student learning. The standards were developed with the assistance of numerous practicing educational leaders and theorists. The objective was to develop standards that brought attention to concepts and factors that differentiate between effective and ineffective schools. Since most formal education occurs in an institutional setting, factors that impact institutional effectiveness were considered along with curriculum, instructional strategies and assessment.

School Purpose and School-Wide Learner Outcomes

An essential element of systemic school improvement is the collective vision or statement of purpose on the part of the members of the school community: What should students know and be able to do upon exit from the school? What does it mean to be an educated person? What is the most effective preparation of students for the future? The purpose provides the school's foundation for establishing school-wide learner outcomes. These state the global knowledge, skills, and understanding students should possess upon exit from the school, or by the time the student completes the planned program. The attainment of these school-wide learner outcomes drives the instructional program and the support operations of the school and therefore is integral to the school's accreditation process. These learner outcomes complement the more specific curricular standards.

Importance of Evidence

Translating the school's purpose into school-wide learner outcomes for all students is a beginning. The self-study phase of the accreditation process revolves around an in-depth gathering of evidence that will enable a school to take an honest look at what is and isn't working based upon the standards and the school-wide learner outcomes. This verification is key to learning about the actual instruction experienced by students.

Observable evidence includes analyzing the following:

- What students are doing and producing (student work).
- Student interviews and observations.
- Hard data and information, e.g., student indicators for attendance, special needs, school-wide performance.
- Other interviews, observations, etc.

Accreditation Cycle

The accreditation process is a perpetual cycle of assessment, planning, implementing, monitoring, and reassessment (self-study, visit, and follow-up). During the year prior to the visit, a school clarifies or redefines its school-wide learner outcomes and begins the formal self-study process that assesses the actual student program with respect to the standards. The self-study process culminates in the development of a six-year School-wide Improvement Plan. The completed school report is sent to the Visiting committee members for careful study at least a minimum of 30 days prior to their visit. Using the results of the visit, the school modifies and implements its Improvement Plan in this ongoing cycle of improvement.

ACTS Six-Year Cycle for Schools:

<i>Year One:</i>	Profile Update, Continuous Accreditation Report, Refinement of School-Wide Improvement Plan
<i>Year Two:</i>	Profile Update, Continuous Accreditation Report, Refinement of School-Wide Improvement Plan
<i>Year Three:</i>	Profile Update, Continuous Accreditation Report, and One-Day Review (for schools with 5 or more Mostly Mets) , Refinement of School-Wide Improvement Plan
<i>Year Four:</i>	Profile Update, Continuous Accreditation Report, Refinement of School-Wide Improvement Plan
<i>Year Five:</i>	Review of all Profile Data, Continuous Accreditation Report, and Program Analysis (beginning of next Self-Study), Revision of School-Wide Improvement Plan
<i>Year Six:</i>	Completion of Self-Study, Refinement of School-Wide Improvement Plan, visit by ACTS Team, Revision of School-Wide Improvement Plan after Site Visit

ACTS Expectations for Analysis in the Self-Study

The school's self-study is predicated on five key components. Through the completion of the accreditation process, the school will have accomplished:

1. The involvement and collaboration of stakeholders in the self-study.
2. The clarification of the school's purpose and the school-wide learner outcomes.
3. The assessment of the actual student program and its impact on student learning with respect to the accreditation standards and the school wide learner outcomes.
4. The development of a School-Wide Improvement Plan that integrates subject area/program and support plans to address identified growth needs.
5. The development and implementation of an accountability system for monitoring the accomplishment of the School-Wide Improvement Plan.

ACTS Self-Study Process

The tasks of the self-study focus on evaluating the school against the standards and assessing the degree to which all students are achieving.

The Site Visit

After careful study of the School Self-Study, a Visiting Team composed of fellow educators spends three days at the school. The purpose of the visit is to provide an outside perspective from educators who are thoroughly familiar with the standards used by the school.

The Visiting Team gives insight to the school through dialogue with the School-Wide Focus Groups and the Stakeholder/Program Committees about the self-study findings and by its own gathering of evidence and analysis of student work. In collaboration the Visiting Team and the Leadership Team/School-wide Focus Groups compare findings. The resulting discussion and written results assist the school in refining the School-Wide Improvement Plan with respect to the standards and the school-wide learner outcomes.

Accreditation Term Factors

The ACTS Commission grants accreditation based on the findings of the Visiting Team. Accreditation factors have been developed by the Commission that reflects the overall aspects of the ongoing school improvement process. These factors have incorporated the five expectations of analysis in the self-study process, the ACTS standards organized by categories, and important emphases already present within the ACTS standards.

Follow-up

Subsequent to the site visit, the school annually refines and implements the School-Wide Improvement Plan. The Leadership Team coordinates this implementation, annually reviews progress, and refines the "next steps" in meeting the goals. All follow-up is done with respect to evidence that students are accomplishing the established school-wide learner outcomes. The governing authority is involved in the ongoing improvement process to ensure that the follow-up process is integral to planning and goal setting and documents progress on the Continuous Accreditation Report.

SCHOOL ACTIONS

TIMELINE

The school's leadership and self-study coordinator establish (1) a general calendar for the major self-study events; and (2) a more detailed timeline of specific committee meetings and tasks to be accomplished. The self-study coordinator works backwards from the date of the visit, allowing at least four to six weeks for the Visiting Committee to study the school report.

SELF-STUDY COMMITTEES

A typical committee structure includes three types: 1) subject area/stakeholders groups; 2) interdisciplinary **Focus Groups** or school-wide groups; and 3) the **Leadership Team**. Each level of responsibility serves a different function. The **Leadership Team** coordinates the entire process and synthesizes findings into a workable school wide Improvement plan.

SELF-STUDY FORMAT

The Self-Study is to be in a digital format saved on a USB flash drive. (One per team member and one for ACTS office)

K12 SELF-STUDY PROCESS AND REPORT: TASKS AND ACTS STANDARDS

Task 1: School History and Demographic Study

A. Brief History of the School:

- Describe the formation of the school, its mission and purpose, and those who were involved in its establishment.
- Answer the following questions.
 - What does your general population consist of?
 - What is the economic status of your community?
 - What is the ethnic breakdown of your community?
 - What other educational opportunities are in your community?
 - What are the major issues unique to your area?

B. Student Indicators:

- *Provide the data; comment on the findings, noting any trends or patterns.*
 - Show the enrollment patterns by grade.
 - What are your student retention rates by year and grade?
 - What is the ethnic makeup of your school?
 - What is the gender mix of your school?
 - What percentage of your students participates in extra-curricular and co-curricular activities?

C. Student Follow-up Data (If applicable):

- *Provide the data; comment on the findings, noting any trends or patterns.*
 - What percent of graduates attended college (2-year and 4-year)?
 - List colleges attended for the past three years.
 - What percent of graduates entered the military?

Task 2: Using the ACTS Standards, analyze the quality of the school program and operations, synthesize and summarize findings, and determine school strengths and growth areas

Standard 1: Philosophy and Objectives

- 1.1 Shall be in agreement with an approved ACTS Statement of Faith.
- 1.2 Shall be sensitive to the needs of the pupils, both spiritually and academically.
- 1.3 Shall be in written form and approved by the school's governing body.
- 1.4 Shall be stated in school literature informing staff, parents, pupils, and prospective families of the school's philosophy.
- 1.5 Shall be used to guide the academic program and overall development of the school and shall be consistent with sound educational practices.

Standard 2: Governance

- 2.1 Shall be spiritual leaders.
- 2.2 Shall govern the school in accordance with the stated philosophy.
- 2.3 Shall be responsible for the formulation of policy and the maintenance of a school policy manual which must include nondiscriminatory policy and practices in admissions, employment and all other aspects of school operation. A complete and current record of all governing body minutes must be maintained.
- 2.4 Shall be responsible for the successful operation of the school.
- 2.5 Shall provide adequate salary and benefits for the staff and faculty. (As stated in salary scale.)

- 2.6 Shall develop and document a School Improvement Plan containing goals, measurable objectives, and a timeline for improving the school that addresses the areas of Curriculum & Instruction, School Staff, Facilities, Student Activities, Student Data Analysis, Directives from the previous site visit and other self-identified areas of needed improvement. (minimum six-year plan).
- 2.7 Shall ensure all required governmental regulations are met (Incorporation, Fire, Health, Food Services, etc.).
- 2.8 Shall list ACTS as an “Additional Insured” on school’s liability policy.
- 2.9 Shall be responsible for the selection and evaluation of the school administration.

Standard 3: Curriculum and Instruction

- 3.1. Shall be consistent with the school’s philosophy.
- 3.2. Shall incorporate a biblical worldview into each subject area.
- 3.3. Shall provide appropriate learning experiences that address student needs as determined by a formal assessment program that includes but is not limited to normed Standardized testing.
- 3.4. Shall engage students in their learning through instructional strategies that ensure achievement of learning expectations.
- 3.5. Shall provide and coordinate learning support services to meet the unique learning needs of students.
- 3.6. Shall provide curriculum guides detailing scope and sequence for the instructional program at each grade level.
- 3.7. Shall provide appropriate curriculum materials for the student population.
- 3.8. Shall be formally and systematically evaluated by the school and revised as needed.
- 3.9. Shall develop and maintain a systematic process for reporting student achievement.
- 3.10. Shall provide adequate information to students and parents about the grading and assessment policies of the school.
- 3.11. Shall be designed in the best interests of the students and shall have a minimum of 180 actual days or a minimum of 170 actual school days and the hourly equivalent of 180 actual school days: Kindergarten - 540 net instructional hours; Grades 1-3 - 720 net instructional hours; Grades 4-12 - 900 net instructional hours (NOTE: If the state requires an actual number of attendance days, the school must meet state requirements.)
- 3.12. Shall provide for appropriate teacher planning and preparation time.
- 3.13. Shall provide curriculum including subjects which constitute a well-balanced educational program and meet or exceed required government graduation requirements.
- 3.14. Shall teach Bible as an academic subject at every grade level with a minimum of three hours of instructional time per week.
- 3.15. Shall provide a library/media and technology center with current, adequate reference, print, non-print materials, books, and technology for the needs of students.
- 3.16. Shall properly catalogue all library/media resources.
- 3.17. Media/Technology used shall implement the school’s instructional process in support of student learning.

Standard 4: School Staff

- 4.1. All members of the school staff shall be Christian and shall exhibit Christian character in all areas of life.
- 4.2. All school personnel (full/part time staff or any volunteers) are required to undergo a background check prior to their employment or being given access to students.
- 4.3. Shall hold a bachelor's degree and ACTS teaching certificate (core subject instructors). Additionally, all staff shall be qualified for whatever assignment given by the governing board.
- 4.4. Deal professionally with students, parents, staff, and administration.
- 4.5. Be sufficient in number to assure a faculty-pupil ratio that is appropriate to the type of curriculum used:
- 4.6. The support staff shall be sufficient in number as to provide adequate clerical assistance to the school.
- 4.7. The school shall provide a custodial staff sufficient to maintain a clean and safe environment.
- 4.8. The school shall provide in any other service area(s) (i.e. student health services, guidance services, food services, transportation services, etc.) adequate and competent staffing or an auxiliary plan or system that meets state and local regulatory requirements.
- 4.9. The school's governing body shall appoint a full-time person as the chief administrator and who shall be on the full-time school staff and functioning in that capacity.
- 4.10. All administrative staff shall hold a bachelor's degree, an ACTS administrator certificate, and be qualified for whatever assignment given by the governing body.
- 4.11. All administrative staff shall deal professionally with students, parents, staff, and administration.
- 4.12. The chief administrator and principals of each school shall attend an ACTS conference on an annual basis.
- 4.13. The school shall establish a formal and systematic process of faculty/staff evaluation which shall be conducted on a periodic basis.
- 4.14. The school shall provide for a formal systematic process of annual staff development (continuing education units through conferences, webinars, continuing college coursework, etc.) and provide evidence/documentation of participation of school administration, faculty and staff.
- 4.15. Staff mentoring and induction programs support instructional improvement consistent with the school's values and beliefs about teaching and learning.
- 4.16. The school staff engages families in meaningful ways in their children's education and keeps them informed of their children's learning progress.
- 4.17. The school provides services that support the counseling, assessment, referral, educational, and career planning needs of all students.

Standard 5: Finances

- 5.1 Shall provide evidence of an annual external audit or review, sound, professional, ethical, and legal practices in all financial operations. (Note: External is defined as an accounting practice/firm that has no affiliation with the school, it's employees or students)
- 5.2 Shall present evidence of adequate and identifiable financial resources and records to operate the school's program with a realistic annual operating budget approved by the governing body and reviewed regularly.
- 5.3 Shall document all fundraising and resource development activities.
- 5.4 Shall publish a tuition and fee schedule that includes a tuition refund policy.

Standard 6: School Facilities

- 6.1 Shall be adequate in size, furniture, and equipment for the type of school program offered and for the size of the enrollment.
- 6.2 Shall be clean and meet all pertinent building other legal requirements.
- 6.3 Shall have clean, sanitary and regularly inspected kitchen and dining areas and comply with all legal requirements, (if food service is offered).

Standard 7: Admission Procedures and Policies

- 7.1 Shall be clearly written in the student handbook.
- 7.2 Shall be formulated by the governing body.
- 7.3 Shall be written in such a manner as to admit only those for whom the program is designed.
- 7.4 Shall contain a published policy of non-discrimination and demonstrate consistent adherence.
- 7.5 Shall address financial and other contractual arrangements between the school and parents/students.

Standard 8: Records

- 8.1 Records shall be kept in a safe, secure, and professional manner (fireproof or electronically current, retrievable dual backed format).
- 8.2 Student records shall be kept on each student enrolled in the school, in a professional manner.
- 8.3 Student records shall be updated on a regular basis.
- 8.4 Student records shall include academic, health, discipline and other pertinent information.
- 8.5 The school shall make provision for the permanent maintenance of all student and faculty records, which includes a policy for the permanent retrieval and storage in the event of school closure.
- 8.6 Access to student records shall follow the provisions of all local, state, and federal regulations relating to an individual's right to privacy.
- 8.7 Personnel records for faculty and administration shall be kept in a professional manner and include transcripts, contracts, tax records, form I-9, evaluations and professional licensure (ACTS certification).

Standard 9: Student Activities

- 9.1 Shall be consistent with the school's philosophy and objectives.
- 9.2 Shall be controlled by the school administration.
- 9.3 Shall be staffed by personnel carefully selected on the basis of applicable background and training.
- 9.4 Shall be adequate in nature and type for the size of the school's enrollment and grade level.

Standard 10: Publications

- 10.1 Shall contain a statement of non-discrimination.
- 10.2 Shall be true, accurate, and reflect ethical guidelines.
- 10.3 The school shall have a student handbook that informs students and parents of the school's philosophy, programs and support services such as attendance policies, guidance services, health services, transportation, food services, dress code, rules and regulations, discipline procedures, a policy statement of due process and grievance procedures, graduation requirements, grading scales and assessment policies.
- 10.4 The school shall publish a faculty and personnel handbook which shall include the following: philosophy of the school, dress code, rules and regulations, discipline procedures, grading, and personnel evaluation policies, and a policy statement of due process and grievance procedures.

Standard 11: Student Data Analysis

- 11.1 See to the continuous collection, analysis and application of learning goals from a range of data sources, including comparison and trend data concerning student learning, instruction, program evaluation, and organizational conditions.
- 11.2 Shall facilitate annual training in best practices of evaluation, interpretation, and use of data.
- 11.3 Engages in creating and implementing measurable and verifiable student learning goals based on multiple data points, which include but are not limited to Standardized/norm referenced testing, formal and informal assessments.
- 11.4 Shall regularly monitor and communicate comprehensive information and analysis of student learning goals, conditions that support student learning, and the achievement of school improvement goals to stakeholders.

Standard 12: Health, Safety, and Security

- 12.1 The school shall be safe and are in current compliance with all federal, state and local required inspections (i.e. Fire, Sprinkler, Extinguisher, Health, Food Service, Sprinkler, Blood-borne Pathogen training, etc.).
- 12.2 The school shall have policies that insure the security of the students and staff (i.e. secured facilities, access to students, release of students, and mandatory reporting procedures for suspected child abuse according to state law.)
- 12.3 The school shall have a Crisis Management Plan, to include as a minimum: Evacuation Plans; Lock-Down Procedures; Active Shooter Procedures, Natural disaster Responses; Grief Counseling (death of student/staff); Media Communications Policy; Emergency Contact Numbers; and an Uninhabitable Building Plan (i.e., secondary location to conduct school following loss of the use of school building).
- 12.4 The school shall conduct drills in accordance with federal, state, and local regulations (fire, lockdown, active shooter, tornado, etc.).
- 12.5 The school shall provide consistent supervision of all students during the school day and all related activities. (including drop-off and pick-up, before and after school extracurricular activities/athletics).
- 12.6 The school shall have policies, procedures and regulations, in accordance with federal, state, and local laws, designed to safeguard students while being transported in school/church owned vehicles (or private vehicles being used for school trips).

APPENDIX 1

ASSOCIATION OF CHRISTIAN TEACHER AND SCHOOLS STATEMENT OF FAITH

- We believe the Bible to be the inspired, the only infallible, authoritative Word of God.
- We believe that there is one God, eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- We believe in the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, in His virgin birth, in His sinless life, in His miracles, in His vicarious and atoning death through His shed blood, in His bodily resurrection, in His ascension to the right hand of the Father, and in His personal return in power and glory.
- We believe that for the salvation of lost and sinful people, regeneration by the Holy Spirit is absolutely essential.
- We believe in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit by whose indwelling the Christian is enabled to live a godly life.
- We believe in the resurrection of both the saved and the lost; they that are saved unto the resurrection of life and they that are lost unto the resurrection of damnation.
- We believe in the spiritual unity of believers in our Lord Jesus Christ.

APPENDIX 2

THE GENERAL COUNCIL OF THE ASSEMBLIES OF GOD STATEMENT OF FUNDAMENTAL TRUTHS

These are nonnegotiable tenets of faith to which all Assemblies of God churches adhere. This list is derived from the official Statement of Fundamental Truths.

1. WE BELIEVE...The Scriptures are Inspired by God and declare His design and plan for mankind.
2. WE BELIEVE...There is only One True God—revealed in three persons...Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (commonly known as the Trinity).
3. WE BELIEVE...In the Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ. As God's son Jesus was both human and divine.
4. WE BELIEVE...though originally good, Man Willingly Fell to Sin—ushering evil and death, both physical and spiritual, into the world.
5. WE BELIEVE...Every Person Can Have Restored Fellowship with God Through 'Salvation' (trusting Christ, through faith and repentance, to be our personal Savior). [1 of 4 cardinal doctrines of the AG]
6. WE BELIEVE...and practice two ordinances—(1) Water Baptism by Immersion after repenting of one's sins and receiving Christ's gift of salvation, and (2) Holy Communion (the Lord's Supper) as a symbolic remembrance of Christ's suffering and death for our salvation.
7. WE BELIEVE...the Baptism in the Holy Spirit is a Special Experience Following Salvation that empowers believers for witnessing and effective service, just as it did in New Testament times. [1 of 4 cardinal doctrines of the AG]
8. WE BELIEVE... The Initial Physical Evidence of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit is 'Speaking in Tongues,' as experienced on the Day of Pentecost and referenced throughout Acts and the Epistles.
9. WE BELIEVE...Sanctification Initially Occurs at Salvation and is not only a declaration that a believer is holy, but also a progressive lifelong process of separating from evil as believers continually draw closer to God and become more Christ like.

10. WE BELIEVE...The Church has a Mission to seek and save all who are lost in sin. We believe 'the Church' is the Body of Christ and consists of the people who, throughout time, have accepted God's offer of redemption (regardless of religious denomination) through the sacrificial death of His son Jesus Christ.
11. WE BELIEVE...A Divinely Called and Scripturally Ordained Leadership Ministry Serves the Church. The Bible teaches that each of us under leadership must commit ourselves to reach others for Christ, to worship Him with other believers, to build up or edify the body of believers—the Church and to meet human need with ministries of love and compassion.
12. WE BELIEVE...Divine Healing of the Sick is a Privilege for Christians Today and is provided for in Christ's atonement (His sacrificial death on the cross for our sins). [1 of 4 cardinal doctrines of the AG]
13. WE BELIEVE...in The Blessed Hope—When Jesus Raptures His Church Prior to His Return to Earth (the second coming). At this future moment in time all believers who have died will rise from their graves and will meet the Lord in the air, and Christians who are alive will be caught up with them, to be with the Lord forever. [1 of 4 cardinal doctrines of the AG]
14. WE BELIEVE...in The Millennial Reign of Christ when Jesus returns with His saints at His second coming and begins His benevolent rule over earth for 1,000 years. This millennial reign will bring the salvation of national Israel and the establishment of universal peace.
15. WE BELIEVE...A Final Judgment Will Take Place for those who have rejected Christ. They will be judged for their sin and consigned to eternal punishment in a punishing lake of fire.
16. WE BELIEVE...and look forward to the perfect New Heavens and a New Earth that Christ is preparing for all people, of all time, who have accepted Him. We will live and dwell with Him there forever following His millennial reign on Earth. 'And so shall we forever be with the Lord!'

APPENDIX 3

CALVARY CHAPEL DISTINCTIVES

- We believe that God calls us to His ministry. (Heb. 5:4)
- We believe that God has given each of us the responsibility of training up the youth of today. (Deut. 6:6-9)
- We believe that there is one head of the Church and our ministry, Jesus Christ. (Eph. 1:22)
- We believe that without the power of the Holy Spirit in us we can do nothing to glorify God. (Acts 1:8 & Zach. 4:6)
- We believe that love is the greatest gift that the Spirit can give us and only through God's love and grace to us can we succeed. (Heb 13:9)
- We believe that the Holy Scriptures are the Word of God and that we are to study and follow them. (I Tim. 4:13)
- We believe that Jesus Christ is central to all that we do in our lives and ministry. (2 Cor. 4:5)
- We believe in the rapture of the Church who will again come in glory at Jesus' return. (Titus 2:13)
- We believe that this ministry was conceived by the Spirit of God and will only last if we follow Him and not our own desires (2 Cor. 3:5-6)
- We believe that without the love of God dwelling in us that we can do no good thing. (John 13:35)
- We believe that as followers of our Lord Jesus we should also strive to be the best that we can in the field of education and training. (2 Tim 2:15)
- We believe that God will bless this ministry if it is in His will and without His guidance and blessing it will cease to exist. (Heb. 11:6)



APPENDIX 4

Association of Christian Teachers and Schools
 911 S. Parsons Ave. Ste. G, Brandon, FL 33511
 P: 813-684-2024 F: 813-684-2026

K-12 Accreditation Application

Please complete the form and mail to the ACTS office, along with \$650.00 accreditation fee.

Date:		
School Name:		
School Address:		
City:	State:	Zip:
Phone:	Fax:	
Email:		
School Website:		
Person to serve as school contact for ACTS Accreditation:		
Report compiled by:		
Year Founded:		
Enter Enrollment for Grade Levels Seeking Accreditation		
<u>Grade Level</u>	<u>Number Enrolled</u>	
Kindergarten (K5)		
Grades 1-5		
Grades 6-8		
Grades 9-12		
Other (please describe)		
Total Enrollment:		
Sponsoring Church or Organization:		
Pastor/Chairman of the Board:		
Denomination:	Assemblies of God <input type="checkbox"/>	Other <input type="checkbox"/>
Is the school incorporated separately from the sponsor? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>		
Is the school a direct extension of a church and/or ministry? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>		
If the school is not incorporated separately or a direct extension of a church or ministry, how is the school organized?		
Identify which curriculum/curricula is/are used in the school:		
<input type="checkbox"/> Christian	<input type="checkbox"/> Secular	<input type="checkbox"/> Combination Christian/Secular
Does the school have plans to change the curriculum in the next five years? Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>		
If yes, describe the changes to be made:		
Is your school registered with the state? Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>		
Is your school accredited by another agency? Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>		
If yes, indicate which agency:		
If your school is currently not accredited but is seeking accreditation with another agency, please indicate which one:		
Accreditation to be completed by school year:		
By entering your name, you electronically acknowledge reading and understanding the above document, and I hereby certify that the information above is true and accurate.		Signature: Date:

Mail completed form and fee to: ACTS, 911 S. Parsons Ave. Ste. G, Brandon, FL 33511

