

## Do I have a role in accreditation?

Yes. You can assist with accreditation efforts by:

- Staying informed about your school's accreditation.
- Educating other parents about your school's accreditation.
- Reinforcing the skills your school is teaching your children.
- Becoming an active member of your school's continuous improvement team and/or internal and external review process.
- Requesting and participating in opportunities to provide feedback to your school, i.e., parent surveys, focus groups, and parent meetings.

## How can I find out more about accreditation?

You can visit [www.advanc-ed.org](http://www.advanc-ed.org) to locate accredited schools and districts in your community, or you can contact your NCA CASI or SACS CASI State Office. A listing of state offices also is available on the AdvancED Web site.

## About AdvancED

AdvancED is the parent organization for the North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement (NCA CASI), the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement (SACS CASI), and the National Study of School Evaluation (NSSE). NCA CASI and SACS CASI serve as accreditation divisions of AdvancED and operate through state offices.

Dedicated to advancing excellence in education worldwide, AdvancED provides accreditation, research, and professional services to 23,000 public and private schools and 4,500 school districts in 30 states and 65 countries. AdvancED engages 18,000 volunteers and touches the lives of nearly 15 million students each year.

Visit [www.advanc-ed.org](http://www.advanc-ed.org) to learn more about accreditation and AdvancED.

## Accreditation: A Guide for Parents



*Accreditation divisions of AdvancED*



## What is accreditation?

Accreditation is a voluntary method of quality assurance developed more than 100 years ago by American universities and secondary schools. Today, to demonstrate educational quality, accreditation is used by education providers of all types from traditional schools to distance learning providers to tutoring centers serving all ages of students from toddlers to adults.

Accreditation engages the school community in meeting high quality standards, implementing a continuous improvement process, and engaging in quality assurance through internal and external review.

## Who provides accreditation?

Through AdvancED, the North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement (NCA CASI) and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement (SACS CASI) accredit Pre-K through grade 12 public and private schools and districts in 30 states, the Navajo Nation, the Department of Defense Schools, and Latin America. NCA CASI also accredits non-degree granting post-secondary schools.

NCA CASI and SACS CASI are non-governmental, non-profit organizations founded in 1895. AdvancED is the parent organization for NCA CASI, SACS CASI, and the National Study of School Evaluation (NSSE), a research and development organization, and is dedicated to advancing excellence in education worldwide.

## What does accreditation mean to me as a parent?

A school's commitment to accreditation assures parents and the community that the school is focused on raising student achievement, providing a safe and enriching learning environment, and maintaining an efficient and effective operation. An accredited school adheres to high quality standards based on the latest research and successful professional practices.

NCA CASI/SACS CASI accreditation means that your school has opened its doors to review and support from an organization bringing 100 years of experience in improving educational quality.

## What are the benefits to my children attending an accredited school?

Students who attend a school accredited by NCA CASI or SACS CASI can rest assured that the school is committed to raising student performance and held accountable for improving student learning on a continual basis.

Accreditation means that students have:

- **Qualified teachers** who are continually working to **improve their practices and teaching methods** in order to increase student performance
- Access to a rich, diverse, and sound **curriculum**
- Access to a range of **student activities** and **support services**
- **Transferability of credits** from school to school
- Greater **access** to federal loans, scholarships, post secondary education, and military programs that require accreditation

The school credits that students earn at an NCA CASI/SACS CASI accredited school are recognized by schools, colleges, and universities globally. Through AdvancED's reciprocal agreements with sister accrediting organizations, students can continue their educational goals in the United States or around the world.

## How do schools earn accreditation?

To earn accreditation from NCA CASI or SACS CASI, schools must:

1. **Meet the AdvancED standards.** The standards require that schools have a clear vision and purpose; have effective and responsive leadership; have a rigorous curriculum taught through sound, research-based methods; collect, report, and use performance results; provide adequate resources and support for its educational programs; value and communicate with stakeholders; and have a commitment to continuously improve. The standards are derived from educational research and best practice. They can be viewed and downloaded at [www.advanc-ed.org](http://www.advanc-ed.org).



2. **Engage in a continuous process of improvement.**

Accredited schools are committed to being better today than they were yesterday. The schools identify a shared vision, maintain a school-wide profile of the current reality, establish plans and assess the implementation of interventions, and document the results of their efforts to improve student learning and school effectiveness.

3. **Demonstrate quality assurance through internal and external review.**

Internal review involves the schools and their stakeholders. External review involves feedback from experienced educators outside the schools. In both cases, reviewers examine evidence to determine if schools are meeting the standards and achieving goals for improving student learning and school effectiveness.