Re-Imagining Accreditation:

The Private PreK-12 School Accreditation Cycle as a Vehicle for Organizational Learning

Kristy Nelson

Vanderbilt University

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Dedication

This project, the ultimate culmination of a terminal degree, marks the check next to a bucket list item I have had for a long time. The acquisition of a doctoral degree was less about improving my attractiveness to employers and much more about doing something difficult and accomplishing it. I had decided long ago that, if I ever took the plunge into an Ed.D. program, it would be at a highly regarded university because the hard work should also be worthwhile and engaging. Thank you, Vanderbilt University, for providing that opportunity.

This voyage in self improvement was at the expense of my family life. My husband Richard and children Hayden, Brigham, Callie, and Sampson cooked and ate dinners without me, covered my responsibilities for me, and because of our rural location, gave up all online access so that I could have a steady connection for classwork. No one ever complained about it, not once in three years.

I dedicate this work to Team Nelson. We support and lift each other up. We hold one another accountable and value integrity and work over popularity and ease. Thank you for supporting me and holding me accountable. Thank you for cheering me on and encouraging me when running a school during COVID and obtaining a doctorate seemed like too much to handle. You make me proud each and every day. I love you more than words can say.

Thank you to Richard for handling the many animal situations that occurred during class time. Dead pets, snake bites, possums on the porch, skunk sprays, and armadillos in the pool always seemed to happen when I was in class and I (and the cats and dogs!) are lucky you are a good and great man!

Thank you to my parents and siblings. You have always set the education bar high and continue to practice what you preach. I was Team Pargmann before I was Team Nelson and the

ethics and morals your modeled still lead me today.

Thank you to Katherine Limoges, my right hand at work and the other half of my brain in all things! Thank you for your never ending support at school and your willingness to cover not only your responsibilities but so much more everyday for the three years I was in school. Your friendship means more to me than I can fully express and I am thankful you are in my life. Thank you to my entire administrative team for covering evening events, athletic games, etc., while I was in class. We are such a force!

Thank you to David Madison and Jeanie Stark at the Southwestern Association of Episcopal Schools. Thank you for your patience, your willingness to answer questions and share information, and your constant drive to improve the organization.

Thank you to Dr. Tracey Armstrong for leading me through my IRB proposal and to Dr. Laura Booker for your guidance and perseverance and willingness to read what seemed like a thousand versions of this capstone. Thank you to Dr. Corbette Doyle for serving as a role model to me and so many others in Cohort Three.

I have loved meeting and spending time with so many amazing individuals from around the globe as a member of Cohort Three. It was a unique and remarkable opportunity to learn from so many diverse and accomplished backgrounds and experiences. I am humbled by your collective abilities, charmed by your style, and I am a better person today because of you.

This work is dedicated to my daughter Callie. I want you to know that you are given only one life and it is up to you what you do with it. You are never too young or too old to follow your passions and dreams. God has given each of us gifts. It is up to us to use them for the greatest good. That is a life well-lived.

Executive Summary

This capstone project looked at the positive and negative aspects of PreK-12 school accreditation with an eye towards re-imagining the 10-year accreditation cycle currently used by the Southwest Association of Episcopal Schools (SAES). The goal was to identify areas of accreditation that allow for organizational learning and improvement as well as those areas that are constraining for schools. SAES staff as well as 19 different school leaders were interviewed and many more participated in answering questionnaires to provide data for this study.

This mixed methods project was designed using organizational learning theory as the core framework with a nod to neo-institutionalism. Prior organizational survey data were reviewed and pertinent documents were analyzed. Twenty-two semi-structured interviews were conducted with SAES staff and with school leaders to evaluate both the enabling and constraining effects of accreditation on schools and to identify patterns of continuous improvement or dynamic learning shifts created during the accreditation process. Respondents were encouraged to re-imagine the 10-year accreditation cycle using the critical appreciative process (CAP) method.

The study was conducted from July to December of 2020. Because of COVID restrictions, interviews were carried out via Zoom and audio files were transcribed and then coded using Quirkos.

The study found that accreditation does promote organizational learning primarily through continuous improvement but also can facilitate dynamic shifts in organizational (double loop) learning. Accreditation provided valuable opportunities for meaningful professional development and peer review, professionalized the processes and procedures of the school, and offered legitimacy to the work of the school through the granting of accreditation. The huge

outlay of time and effort to prepare the self-study and documentation was a constraining factor of

accreditation and leaders felt that the focus of accreditation was on compliance and not teaching

and learning. Contributing factors to these findings were the size of the school, age and grade

range of student population served, and the involvement of effective governance at the school.

The general response of those interviewed was that the accreditation process was more focused

on accountability than innovation.

Recommendations for SAES focus on three areas: providing more touchpoints

throughout the 10-year cycle, leveraging technology to streamline the accreditation process and

free up more time for interactive review, and focusing on innovation in teaching and learning by

realigning the self-study to the Baldrige Model to provide more opportunities for innovation at

the school level. A reconfigured 10-year cycle was proposed.

Introduction

The Texas Association of Episcopal Schools began in 1957 as a method for sharing resources among private Episcopal schools. In the 1970s, schools in Louisiana and Arkansas joined, and the name was changed to the Southwestern Association of Episcopal Schools (SAES). In 1987, the association began acting as an accrediting body, ensuring that the schools met the appropriate standards and criteria for educating students. SAES now has a membership of 113 schools in six states, 83 of which are accredited by the Association.

The school accreditation process is unique to America. Non-governmental, it is overseen by non-profit organizations and carried out largely by a peer group of volunteers. Accreditation began among colleges and universities in the late 1800s as a method of both consumer protection against charlatans and for the practical purpose of allowing the transfer of college credits from one entity to another (Flores, 2015). This practice soon spread to high schools and college prep schools, again as a method of proving legitimacy and an adherence to high standards of education and organization. In the 1980s, accreditation began in elementary schools as well. Accrediting agencies continue to stress that the focus is on quality improvement rather than accountability, even as accreditation is viewed by governmental agencies as an accountability measure (Bassett, 2004; Flores, 2015). Since beginning with colleges and universities, accreditation has now spread across many organizational fields, from healthcare to non-profit agencies.

As the Head of School at an Episcopal school in the Diocese of West Texas and under the umbrella of SAES, I ushered my school through the accreditation process in 2018. At the time, I was a newly-hired interim leader and had to scramble to meet accreditation requirements as we had an on-site visiting (OSV) team arriving soon after I began. The entire experience was

exhausting but also emboldening, fostering a closeness among my administrative team as we worked countless hours to make it happen. While the visit ended in accreditation, I knew we could have created a better plan for both the present and the future if I had a better understanding of what was expected of me as a leader and of my school as an organization. This spurred my interest in fostering learning within my own organization to prepare for the future.

A new Director of Accreditation came on board in 2019 at SAES, very interested in gathering feedback from school leaders about the process to see what works, what does not, and what could be done differently to provide more value-added opportunities for schools. As a former Episcopal Head of School, she had personal thoughts about the process but was interested in the experiences and candid feedback of those still leading private schools throughout the six-state area. For this capstone project, I am partnering with SAES to provide an overview of the process, denote its contributions to both school accountability and innovation, and recommend changes or improvements to the process if needed to create added value for member schools.

The results of this capstone project will inform the future of accreditation in SAES, having a direct impact on both the design and timing of the cycle.

Organizational Context

SAES was a founding member of the Texas Private Schools Accreditation Commission (TEPSAC), which oversees accreditation agencies in Texas and is recognized by the Texas Education Agency. Today, SAES is both a membership association and a school accrediting body, overseeing 113 schools in six states: Texas, Louisiana, Arkansas, Oklahoma, New Mexico, and Arizona, 83 of which are accredited. SAES is recognized by the education agencies in those states as an organization with accreditation powers. SAES also is a founding member of the International Council for the Advancement of Independent School Accreditation (ICAISA) and

sits as the only faith-based organization on the Council. It also is the only Episcopal accrediting

agency in the United States.

The association itself is staffed by only four individuals: an Executive Director, a

Director of Accreditation, a Director of Professional Development, and an Executive Assistant.

Each accreditation on-site visit (OSV) team contains at least one member of the SAES staff. The

majority of the team is made up of volunteers from member schools.

After receiving initial accreditation status, schools within SAES must be reassessed

through a reaccreditation process every 10 years. The current process includes an extensive self-

study that reviews the applicant school's adherence to standards in the following areas: Mission;

Episcopal Identity, School Culture, and Climate; Governance; Organization and Administration;

Teaching and Learning; Fiscal Responsibility; and Facilities and Learning. Schools must supply

Documents in Adherence to Standards (DAS) to be reviewed to show adherence and

commitment to best practices as well as documents that constitute the School Safety Checklist,

compiled of documentation of policies, contracts, and provisos that protect and indemnify the

school as an entity.

The self-study is provided in advance of the three-day On-Site Visit (OSV) by a

volunteer team consisting of faculty and staff of member Episcopal schools. DAS and the items

on the School Safety Checklist are provided for review during the OSV. Before leaving, the OSV

team provides the school with a list of commendations, suggestions, and recommendations.

Commendations are things the schools do well, suggestions are ideas the schools may want to

consider, and recommendations are items that the schools are required to correct and/or respond

to in writing at a later date. This report is provided to the SAES Standards Committee, who

makes the decision to approve, approve with conditions through probationary or provisional

accreditation, or to deny accreditation. The Standards Committee consists of some members of

the SAES Board of Directors as well as additional heads of school from within the SAES

member schools. A report of the decisions of the Standards Committee is sent to the full SAES

Board of Directors for informational purposes. If approved, the school receives accreditation for

10 years, dependent upon a Year One Letter from the Head of School with outlined plans to

address recommendations, and a Year 5 Interim Report. Unless there are special circumstances,

no special information is required in Years 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8 or 9. Schools that fail to meet the

standards of accreditation may lose their accredited status.

It should be noted that there are circumstances in which the Standards Committee may

require one or more "special reports" to be submitted within the ten-year cycle. Changes in

programming, such as adding a new grade, a HOS search occurring during or around

accreditation, provisional accreditation status that requires follow-up to correct issues, and other

situations can trigger a special report requirement for schools that occurs outside of the required

interim report in Year 5.

Area of Inquiry

The SAES Standards Committee and the Director of Accreditation are concerned that the

current 10-year accreditation cycle is not focused enough on school improvement but is overly

focused on compliance. The highest level of engagement between SAES and schools occurs in

Year 5 when an interim report is due and again in Years 9 and 10 when preparing for the next

reaccreditation visit through the completion of a self-study. However, there is no requirement to

focus on school improvement to address issues and no current vehicle to promote engagement in

a continuous improvement process in the remaining years of the accreditation cycle. While the

accreditation cycle and its required pieces satisfy the standards for accreditation, the SAES staff,

Board of Directors, and Standards Committee want to incorporate more focus on collaborative school improvement into the accreditation process.

SAES states that the goal of accreditation is both accountability and innovation. To that end, the organization considered a different type of self-study named Self-Study II and schools with a long history of stable reaccreditation visits were invited to apply to pilot the study. The goal of the piloted self-study focused less on "checking the boxes" and more on identifying three areas in need of growth. Schools were then invited to think strategically about the best way to address those growth areas through both short-term and long-term goals. Results from the pilot ran the gamut from a complete misunderstanding of the purpose of the pilot study to well-thought submissions that focused on human design. Those who participated and were interviewed for this project expressed an overall lack of clarity in the instructions provided by SAES for the piloted Self-Study II and reported receiving different answers from each person they approached for clarification, noting that "those in charge" didn't speak with one voice.

Further complicating the situation, the organization's membership covers schools in six states who all must adhere to different state mandates. Furthermore, schools vary in size and populations served, from rural preschools with fewer than 50 students to preK-12 urban schools with more than 1,000 enrolled students. Some schools are situated in historically underserved areas while others cater to an elite clientele. Accordingly, the ideal accreditation instrument and process cannot be a "one size fits all," but allow for flexibility that meets the individual school's unique needs while adhering to the same overarching high standards.

Literature Review

Before launching into a capstone study about how accreditation is perceived by SAES schools, I first reviewed relevant prior research studies. In this section, I will review literature

about accreditation--its history and its current role in K12 education. Additionally, I will review research on school leadership in relation to school improvement, the organizational needs from accreditation, and accreditation models before reviewing types of inquiry and theories pertinent to the project.

Accreditation History

American education accreditation is unique in the world. It is non-governmental/regulatory, peer-reviewed by volunteers, and relies on the candor of self-reporting for the purpose of improvement. It is firmly encased in American values as it upholds the autonomy of the institution in deciding how to meet the prescribed standards. Its very purpose rose from an explosion of schools, colleges, and universities and was built upon need rather than regulatory design (Brittingham, 2009). Independent schools, for example, believe standardized testing should be descriptive and diagnostic rather than predictive and punitive. Independent schools believe "the real test of a school's success is the student's success in secondary school or college" (Bassett, 2004, p. 3). The fact that accreditation teams are staffed primarily by volunteers removes bias that could occur from being hired consultants for the school (Oldham, 2018).

While universities and high schools have undergone an accreditation process for more than 100 years, it was only in the 1980s that elementary schools began to seek accreditation (Oldham, 2018). While not a governmental process, independent school accreditation has, through the years, been altered through different acts of legislation, the most recent being No Child Left Behind (NCLB). In addition, accreditation status is often used as a criterion by government agencies when awarding state and federal monies (Burris, 2008).

The American accreditation process is so entrenched and associated with perceived

independent school status that it often becomes the accreditation method of choice for

international schools, which often must also comply with the regulatory standards of its' location

as well as the governing entities of the students' resident countries (Fertig, 2007). There is a

movement among international schools to create an accrediting body specifically for this subset

of independent schools so that the schools do not become overly homogenous.

The American idea of accreditation has now become the norm for educational entities

around the world, with most models mirroring the American standard. A study of Dutch

inspectorates, for example, looks at K12 school organization, teaching and learning processes,

and overall results. If a school fails an inspection, the focus is on remediation and improvement,

not punishment. The Inspectorate has no actual authority to sanction or fine a school but does

publish its findings; the public has options for school choice and so public pressure is used as the

management tool (Ehren & Visscher, 2008).

Accreditation Purpose

Accreditation serves a variety of purposes. It is viewed by school employees as important

and a means of outside validation for local programs (Wozniak, 2017). It is seen as meeting a

benchmark of high standards by the general public, and for rural areas, accreditation allows

schools to compare themselves with facilities in more populated areas (Pomey, et al., 2010).

Accreditation is considered so important from a business and cultural perspective that losing

accredited status can not only ruin a school, but also have a devastating effect on the surrounding

neighborhood (Oldham, 2018).

Bassett (2004), who served as the president of the National Association of Independent

Schools (NAIS) for twelve years, defines school accreditation as being conducted by a

"reputable accrediting organization" and as "thorough, rigorous, and professional" (p. 1). He

goes on to say that accreditation "is rooted in two underlying principles: (1) offering full

disclosure (what a school believes — its mission — and how it operates in congruence with

those beliefs), and (2) meeting high standards (how schools should function and what students

should learn)" (p. 1). Independent K12 schools were the first to undergo accreditation and have a

long history with the process.

Little study has been done specific to the role of accreditation in independent schools.

And while there is especially little research involving the vitality of the reaccreditation process as

it relates to continuous improvement among independent K12 schools, there is a large body of

research looking at the accreditation process of other entities, particularly colleges, universities,

and medical organizations. Many of the conclusions drawn from this research are applicable to

K12 schools.

There is a perceived disparity in the adaptive ability of schools when compared to

business. School personnel appear to be more entrenched in patterns of behavior and slower to

adapt to changing circumstances. Wozniak (2017), in his case study of an independent school,

noted an overall lack of systemic thinking within the organization as well as a lack of

communication between departments which impeding the organization's ability to improve.

There is a need for everyone involved in the accreditation study to have and utilize a shared

vocabulary.

One example shared involved a nursing school preparing a Year 5 interim report in a 10-

year accreditation cycle that created an ad hoc committee to establish a growth plan towards a

continuous improvement model. The committee's recommendation of a policy management

protocol was made to manage the overwhelming number of policies required. Improved

knowledge of the standards by all employees was considered essential. Data warehousing of all

important or required documents in one place was considered critical to process improvement

(Hanna, Duvall, Turpin, Pendleton-Romig, & Parker, 2016).

While accreditation brings many advantages to schools, there are also costs, not only in

actual dollars but in time and effort (Vardanyan, 2013). The costs may be high, particularly

during the time of the site visit, but that amount annualized over 10 years became much more

manageable and accounted for only a fraction of a percent of the annual budget (Lynch, 2018).

Best Practices

There are noted commonalities in high-performing schools that can serve as best

practices. In their meta-analysis of more than 20 research studies, Shannon & Bylsma (2007)

found nine areas of strength that high-performing schools share. These focused on both

relationships and academics. Positive relations between teachers, students, and one another was

key. Active support structures that recognized student or teacher performance deficiencies and

remediated them were in place. Teachers were seen and treated as experts in their fields and

departments were given the freedom and responsibility to teach the students in the manner they

thought best. Curriculum was aligned both horizontally and vertically and decisions were data

driven (Shannon & Bylsma, 2007). In order to improve, a school must work with what it has and

then work towards improvement and change from there (Cooper, Ponder, Merritt, & Matthews,

2005).

School Leadership

The leadership of the principal is critical in meeting benchmarks (Fryer, 2007). Multiple

studies indicate the role of the school leader is key, both in the accreditation process and in

promoting continuous improvement (Fryer, 2007; Serafin, 2014; Dutton, 2015; Ulmer, 2015;

Little, 2020). In schools where the principal was directly involved with the planning and made it

a priority on campus, the faculty felt more secure in the process. Collaboration between faculty

and administration was imperative as it led to ongoing change through buy-in. Stable leadership

was essential for long-term change to take root (Serafin, 2014).

Leaders must be prepared to manage barriers in the change process and are considered

instrumental in maintaining focus on the vision and promoting change through building trust and

authenticity (Little, 2020). Educational leaders are encouraged to identify, implement, and

embrace those accreditation processes that focus not only on continuous improvement and

student achievement but also on professional development opportunities that allow teachers to

grow and encourage success. Leaders should provide resources for teachers to successfully

implement and maintain accreditation processes in order to alleviate challenges with teacher

attitudes (Ulmer, 2015).

Compounding the issue of leadership is the lack of mentoring found among independent

school principals. Dutton (2015) examined the mentoring process of educational leaders in

independent schools and found that roughly half of those studied (49%) went through no

mentoring process. Mentoring showed no affiliation to school population, location, category or

level. Time, financial restraints, and physical location were all seen as barriers to the mentoring

process.

The accreditation process places stress not only on the leaders but also on the teachers

(Holland, 2019). Often, the reporting requirements of an accreditation visit seem overwhelming

to school employees (Fryer, 2007). Participation of all stakeholders in the accreditation process,

however, has intangible benefits, including acting as a form of professional development and

supporting diversity; it is cost-effective and brings all the different aspects of a school under one umbrella (Brittingham, 2009). Dialogue about key processes is important among all stakeholders. (Alexander, Shumway, & Gaulden, 2008).

Organizational Needs of Accreditation

Organizations also have needs of the accrediting entity. Participants in the accreditation process would rather view the accreditor as a resource instead of an authoritarian figure and believed information learned from the accreditor to be invaluable (Little, 2020). The accrediting body "owes" the sharing of best practices with schools as they prepare for accreditation (Pomey, et al., 2010; Boozang, 2016). Communication between and among peer institutions is key as organizations prepare for accreditation (Boozang, 2016). There also is a need for organizations to have the areas in which they excel acknowledged (Pomey, et al., 2010).

The accreditation process involves numerous individuals—school leaders, teachers, governing boards, students, parents, and community members all serve as stakeholders and each has a role to play in the accreditation process. But there also are organizational needs that are not related to stakeholders. Use of an assessment matrix was found to be a valuable tool in helping colleges prepare for accreditation by stimulating directed conversation to aid in the discussion of the organization, with the Baldrige model being the most effective overall (Roland, 2011). Further, Serafin (2014) highlighted the necessity for time built into the school's schedule to meet, plan, and execute ideas and remediations after the visit is over. Halverson (2010) looked at the importance of formative feedback in improvement strategies. He defined formative feedback as the interrelationship between intervention, assessment, and actuation and noted that data collection is required to track improvement. Accreditation can either be used as a stick or a carrot in assessment initiatives and it was deemed important to nurture assessment cultures while in

transition. Creating teams worked as a catalyst to promote facilitation of change and program improvement. (Little, 2020).

Baldrige Model

SAES states explicitly in publications that the purpose of accreditation is twofold: to ensure high standards of accountability and to promote innovation within the school. "Managing for innovation is one of the core values of the Malcom Baldrige criteria," according to Furst-Bowe & Bauer (2007, p. 6). Therefore, utilizing the educational criteria adapted from Malcom Baldrige's framework for continuous performance improvements in business and industry may be beneficial in the restructuring of the accreditation cycle. Leist, et al., (2004) articulated the eleven educational values derived from the original Baldrige model to be:

> (a) visionary leadership; (b) learning-centered education; (c) organizational and personal learning; (d) valuing faculty, staff, and partners; (e) agility; (f) focus on the future; (g) managing for innovation; (h) management by fact; (i) social responsibility; (j) focus on results and creating value; and (k) systems perspective (pp. 59-60).

The Baldrige model is closely aligned with quality improvement and continuous improvement (Roland, 2011, p. 91), allowing it to mesh well with organizational learning theory. Finally, the Baldrige Model is aligned with outcome-based accreditation, rather than prescriptive inputs and focuses on continuous improvement and enhancements to the stakeholder experience (Alexander, Shumway & Gaulden, 2009, p. 18).

If we accept Bassett's (2004) assertion that the principles of accreditation are tied to the beliefs of the school organization and how those beliefs drive the adherence to high standards in both operations and student output, then continuous improvement should be the outcome. Continuous improvement is imbedded in the general reaccreditation process because of internal pressures that drive advancement and improvement and external pressures from competition

from other schools that change and improve and thus move the benchmarking standards higher

(Lejeune, 2011).

Studies suggest there is a tendency to devote the most time and attention to the initial

process and self-study involved in becoming accredited (Alexander, et al., 2008; Pomey, et al.,

2010). Once initial accreditation has been achieved, efforts towards continuous improvement

stagnate (Alexander et al., 2008), particularly among those organizations that have been

accredited for 10 years or more (Pomey, et al., 2010).

Institutional Theory

Institutional theory, as defined by DiMaggio & Powell (1991), changed the view of

organizations as open systems and instead focused on the constraints or limitations that do not

allow organizations to change as much as may be needed. This revised institutional theory, or

neo-institutionalism, was further explained by Scott (2001), who attempted to combine the

different and competing institutional theories into one universal definition that he referred to as

the three pillars of institutionalism. He asserts that "institutions are composed of cultural-

cognitive, normative, and regulative elements that, together with associated activities and

resources, provide stability and meaning to social life" (p. 48). *Regulative* refers to the policies

and procedures in place, *normative* elements are the moral underpinnings of an organization—

what is believed to be the "right thing to do," *and cultural-cognitive* elements refers to the

created reality shared by those in the organization (Scott, 2001).

Organizations that are alike form groups or institutional fields that all provide similar

products or services. Because they are constantly compared to one another, similar organizations,

such as schools, tend to become isomorphic and this sameness becomes a constraint, keeping

competing organizations homogenous (Hanson, 2001).

Therefore, according to institutional theory, accreditation forces conformity and constrains the manner in which schools can legitimately operate. Meyer, Scott & Deal (1992) blame accreditation for forcing schools to conform to a set of both professional and legal rules in order to "maintain their legitimate status as schools," moving the focus away from teaching and instruction and focusing instead on processes and procedures and leading to isomorphism (p. 54). However, institutional theory does not address how organizations, such as schools, do in fact change over time. Geppert (2000) credits this change to the fact that schools are made up of individuals with free will and adaptability.

> Institutional theory represents a body of thought that identifies, emphasizes, and explores the forces that constrain organizations from change...What is fundamentally missing in this discussion is that educational systems do change, perhaps not as often or dramatically as reform advocates would like, but they *do* change"(p. 653-4).

We then must look at what theory could explain and enable this ability to change.

Learning Organizations

Institutional theory is, in effect, at odds with organizational learning theory, which views accreditation as enabling rather than constraining. According to Elliott (2013), "Accreditation, as a process of evaluative inquiry, has the potential to promote organizational learning and thereby improve an organization's ability to change" (p. 29).

According to organizational learning theory, schools operate as *open*-system organizations, as their subsystems are interdependent between one another and it is in continuous interaction with its environment (Carnoy, 2005; Boddy, 2008). It is this continuous interaction which lends itself to continuous improvement, but that improvement is dependent upon the unique situation that exists. As such, there is no one way for a school to function or to learn. As Dill (1999) and Giesecke and McNeil (2004) have noted, "the success rate of an organization is

also highly dependent of its ability to function as a learning organization" (as cited in Isabella, 2015, p. 4). The school, as an entity, demonstrates the three basic elements of learning organizations: an organization, skilled at acquiring new knowledge, transferring this new knowledge across the organization and modifying the way it operates. Isabella (2015) asserts "organizations need to be learning and consequently modifying themselves in order to meet continuous internal and external developments" (p. 4).

If accreditation measures the ability of a school to successfully learn and change in accordance with its surroundings while following the prescribed standards, then "the perspective of defining quality as a transformation process and hence, the concept of quality as a result of change is most relevant. The emphasis in the transformation view is one of improvement and change-oriented rather than stakeholder or product-focused" (Isabella, 2015, p. 5).

Evaluative Inquiry

Evaluative inquiry drives accreditation, evaluation, and organizational development, all utilizing a set of standards, whether internal or external, upon which comparisons are made and conclusions are drawn (Thibodeau, 2011). The recognition of problems is important but problem-solving alone does not lead to continuous improvement. Organizations without crises still may further develop and should continue to move forward. Therefore, evaluative inquiry works as a method for both accreditation and the research of accreditation.

Organizational learning refers to both single loop learning and double loop learning. Single loop learning, or continuous improvement, is "incremental in nature and refers to ongoing detection and correction of errors. In contrast the latter (double loop learning) is more radical and involves questioning the underlying assumptions or values which are the basis for decision making (Argyris & Schön, 1978; Senge, 1990) (as cited in Elliott, 2013, p. 738).

Although both modes of learning are valuable, as they can lead to a higher degree of

effectiveness and competitiveness, double loop learning is often perceived to be the true conduit

through which organizational learning occurs (Geppert, 2000, p. 29).

For the purposes of this process improvement study, OL will be viewed from a social

constructivist viewpoint and focus will be on the role of evaluative inquiry to promote OL

through both continuous improvement and double-loop learning.

> Evaluative inquiry for organizational learning and change is grounded in a social
> constructivist theory of learning which suggests that learning takes place through (a) the
> collective creation of meaning, (b) action, (c) the development of new knowledge, (d) an
> improvement in systemic processes, and (e) the overcoming of tacit assumptions. Team
> learning from evaluative inquiry occurs when individuals share their experiences, values,
> beliefs, assumptions, and knowledge through dialogue, and engage in collaborative
> learning efforts. When individuals and teams disseminate their learning from inquiry
> throughout an organization, and action results from this learning, it can be said that the
> organization learns. Evaluative inquiry can facilitate learning at all levels by stimulating
> and supporting the ongoing process of asking questions, the collection and analysis of
> data, and using what is learned from an inquiry to act on important organizational issues.
> (Preskill & Torres, 1999, p. 50)

Since evaluative inquiry is a concept that supports both single- and double-loop learning, it

works in tandem with the design of the accreditation process.

Critical Appreciative Process (CAP)

Critical Appreciative Process (CAP) is a combination of critical evaluative inquiry and

appreciative inquiry. Appreciative inquiry (AI) was first introduced by Cooperrider and Srivastva

in 1987 as a generative process that focused on narrative to discover the best of organizations

and then build upon it. Primarily known as the 4D process (discovery, dream, design, deliver) or

alternatively as the 4I process (initiation, inquiry, imagination, innovation), it posited interviews

and stories as a method of discovering what "worked" in organizations.

AI is based on the following:

1. Discovery – Appreciating – valuing the best of what is/what gives life?

2. Dream – Envisioning – what might be?

3. Design – Dialoguing – what should be?

4. Destiny – Innovating – what will be? (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2000)

Into the 1990s, Cooperrider's focus shifted from generative to positive, and he began to embrace a social constructionist's view that positive thought created positive outcomes (Ridley-Duff & Duncan, 2015). Cooperrider (2008) argued that "problem-solving" suggests an empirical reality of what "should be" that requires an intervention. In contrast, AI focuses on generating new ideas and new content from the talent and resources that currently exist within the organization. AI was framed as "appreciative" rather than critical and AI researchers embraced this positive approach (van der Haar and Hosking, 2004; Grant, 2007; Lewis, et al., 2008; Vital, et al, 2008).

Whitney (1998) believed the constructionist view of AI allowed all employees and stakeholders a voice in the organization and moving away from a hierarchal structure through changing the quality of participation and action within the organization. The purpose of AI was to change the focus to "what gives life to the organization and its people when they are at their best" (p. 2). Whitney explained it as:

> Although we usually don't think of them this way, most social realities—schools, hospitals, stock exchanges, political parties, churches—are actualizations of ideas that once existed only in the minds of a few women and men. (p. 2)

AI allows topics of inquiry to also be topics of interest that engage participants and allow for patterns of thinking to shift and habit to change through the evolution of conversation. Cooperrider & Whitney (2000) noted that discussion of change as a huge flood of problems to overcome will lead nothing but the discovery of problems without any solutions. He stated that

the discovery phase of the 4D process shifted attention away from what was *not* working and

moved it to what *was*.

Proponents of AI believe that it shifts inquiry from the concept of fixing a broken

organization that is in need of repair to acknowledging that the organization is a wealth of

resources and strengths to be affirmed and encouraged (Browne, 2008; Casey, 2018).

Critics of AI counter that only focusing on the positive means that negative feelings are

discounted or even disallowed, producing an unrealistic portrayal of the organization and

ultimately leading to failure to elicit real change. Still others acknowledge the overall palatability

of the AI process, but caution that "unhappy actualities" have a place in the change process and

ignoring them runs the risk of maintaining the status quo (Boje, 2010).

A broad definition of critical theory focuses on consciousness and ideology, bringing in a

political aspect and drawing attention to everyday events where power is used to suppress

conflict (Grant & Humphries, 2006). When viewed as such, it would seem critical theory and

appreciative inquiry are completely at odds, but Grant argues that they share the same research

objective: to encourage and facilitate change. Both theories are also based in social

constructionist theory where meaning is negotiated between participants.

Grant and Humprhies (2006) began to use critical inquiry in conjunction with AI in a

process referred to as CAPs. Grant and Humphries did this in order to provide a deeper

appreciation of the situation under investigation that still allowed use of the AI process (Ridley-

Doff & Duncan, 2015). Doing so allowed the identification and recognition of inequalities, such

as power imbalances that could be contributing to the genesis of issues. Exploring the questions

"what is?" and "what might have been?" before moving on to "what could be?" and "what will

be?" allows the negative experiences that have shaped the organization to be acknowledged and

recognized before turning focus to the positive aspects of the organization. Identifying the

negative events though critical inquiry methods also teaches what should be avoided in the future

(Grant a& Humphries, 2006; Ridley-Duff & Duncan, 2015). It is considered a generative process

that addresses the negative before focusing on the positive (Boje, 2010).

Fig. 1 CAPs through the Organizational Lens

Fig. 1 Critical appreciative processes (CAPs) through the organizational learning lens
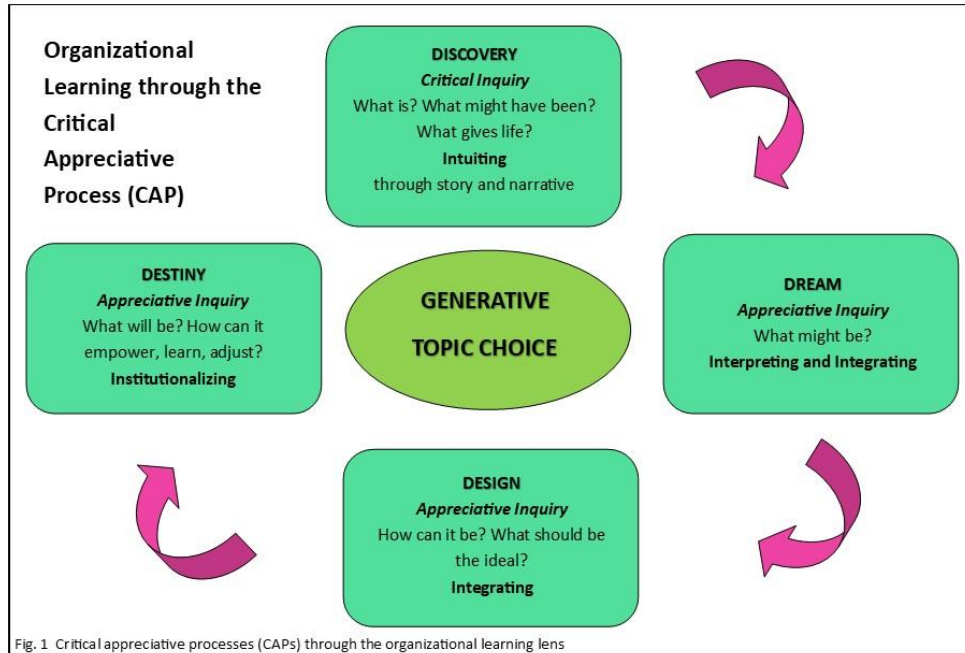
The CAPs method legitimizes the use of appreciative inquiry. The "dual mode of inquiry

embraced by CAPs enhances the generative capacity of AI by encouraging a wider range of

appreciative processes" (Ridley-Duff & Duncan, 2015, p. 1595). Among these processes are

valuing critical acts that can create new possibilities. CAPs allow negative events to have their

place in the change process.

Conceptual Framework

Organizational learning is identified as "the intentional practice of collecting information, reflecting on it, and sharing the findings, in order to improve the performance of an organization" (Milway & Saxton, 2011, p. 44). It is the primary manner in which strategic organizational renewal occurs. Garvin (1993) refers to organizational learning as a way in which entities acquire and utilize knowledge to modify existing knowledge and to modify behaviors and gain a competitive advantage. In the 21st century, much of the research of organizational learning centers on Senge's (2006) *learning organization*, where leadership is decentralized so that all members of the organization can work towards common goals. Senge considers the ideal learning organization to be "an organization that is continually expanding its capacity to create its future" (p.12).

Senge's (2006) learning organization theory lends itself nicely to the process of accreditation as a catalyst or leveraging event to force self-analysis and break through the barriers of inertia often found at the institutional level (Olson, 2016). Organizational learning recognizes two types of change learning: single-loop learning or continuous improvement and double-loop learning, which aligns changes in behaviors with the changes in the underlying values (Senge, 1990). Single-loop learning can be better described as an ongoing course correction made up of numerous small changes; double-loop learning is more radical and requires changes in thinking and habit.

Evaluative inquiry through the accreditation process allows for organizations to learn both through involvement in the evaluation process itself and through the results of the evaluation. Involvement in the evaluation process, both through *preparation for* and *in the act of* evaluation, allows participants to learn in a different manner. In doing so, there is an opportunity

to change the mindset and beliefs of the individual and, in turn, lead to questioning long held

assumptions within the organization. This is an example of double-loop learning or impactful

change within the entire organization (Elliot, 2010, p. 34).

Accreditation can act as an enabler for organizations through evaluative inquiry, focusing

attention on policies that promote learning and promote institutional improvement. Elliott (2010)

stated "linking accreditation to organizational learning, the enabling potential of accreditation is

emphasized and the human element further explored. Accreditation is seen as a possible means

of generating knowledge and stimulating learning for individuals, groups, and organizations" (p.

38).

Institutional theory, in contrast, focuses on the manner in which accreditation acts as a

constraint or limiting agent on organizations. Institutional theory posits that schools, in their

quest for legitimacy, become isomorphic because they choose to mimic the methods of

successful schools rather than investigate what will work best for the individual organization

(Elliott, 2013).

Organizational learning theory and CAPs both have their origins in story and narrative

(Crossan, Lane, & White, 1999; Watkins & Moore, 2001). The use of interviews and narratives

to dream/intuit give them a common mode of inquiry.

Questions

This study seeks to understand to what extent the SAES ten-year accreditation cycle

offers an opportunity to go beyond the collection and monitoring of performance information

and the limitations of neo-institutionalism to the promotion of organizational learning (OL)

(Preskill 1994; Preskill & Torres, 1999; Goh, Cousins, & Elliott, 2006).

More specifically, the purpose of this study is to explore the relationship between

organizational learning, institutional theory, and the SAES ten-year accreditation process

(evaluative inquiry) to ascertain the enabling influence as predicted by Senge's (1990) learning

organization or the constraining influence as posited by DiMaggio & Powell's (1991)

institutional theory of the accreditation process on the organization and to identify the contextual

factors and conditions which influence the development and sustainability of organizational

learning capacity.

1. What are the outcomes of the current ten-year SAES accreditation cycle for schools?

    a. Does accreditation have an enabling or positive influence on the organization?

       If so, how?

    b. Does accreditation promote organizational learning through single-loop or

       double-loop learning?

    c. Does accreditation have a constraining influence on the organization? If so,

       how?

2. What contextual factors and conditions influence these potential outcomes?

Project Design

To address these contextual issues and to explore the relationship between organizational

learning and SAES accreditation, an exploratory mixed methods research approach was used.

For this capstone project, *accreditation* refers to the re-accreditation process after initial

accreditation has been achieved. The purpose of this study is to investigate the perceptions of

school leaders regarding their experiences with the SAES reaccreditation process to determine to

what extent single and double-loop learning are facilitated during the current ten-year

accreditation process and to what extent evaluative inquiry (accreditation) fosters an enduring

organizational learning capacity (Garvin, 1993, p.79). Finally, the current process is challenged

through the use of narrative to potentially redesign the accreditation cycle.

<div align="center">**Data Collection**</div>

Four types of data were collected in the course of this project. First, SAES annually

surveys the 113 school leaders within the association and provided the responses to the surveys

for the three previous school years (n=54; n=61; n=63). A copy of the survey to all school

leaders is listed in Appendix B.

Three years (2017-18, 2018-19, and 2019-20) of post-accreditation visit questionnaire

results also were provided by SAES. These surveys asked for feedback primarily in the form of

open-ended questions from school leaders after hosting an onsite accreditation visit (n=11; n=6;

n=7). A copy of the post onsite visit survey is located in Appendix C.

Table 1. Data Sources

Data Source	Answers:
Accreditation documents, including: Accreditation Handbook; Documents in Adherence to Standards (DAS)	Historical basis of issue
Prior SAES Survey Results	Does accreditation have an enabling influence on the org.? Does accreditation promote organizational learning? Does accreditation constrain schools in any way?
Semi-structured Interviews	Does accreditation have an enabling influence on the org.? Does accreditation promote organizational learning? Does accreditation constrain schools in any way? What contextual factors and conditions affect potential outcomes?
Post-interview Questionnaire	What contextual factors and conditions affect potential outcomes?

Other documents, including accreditation manuals and handbooks, were provided. The

accreditation handbook outlines the information required of schools as they prepare both the

required self-study and the Documents in Adherence to Standards (DAS). The handbook lists the

questions that must be answered in each of seven domains (Mission; Episcopal Identity, School

Culture, and Climate; Governance; Organization and Administration; Teaching and Learning;

Fiscal Responsibility; and Facilities and Learning). SAES also provided a list of schools sorted

by the current year of accreditation within the 10-year cycle. The 83 accredited schools are

spread out within a 10-year span, allowing the OSV teams to be able to fit visits to multiple

schools within a nine-month time frame. In 2014-15, for example, only one accreditation visit

occurred; in 2019-20, 15 accreditation visits were scheduled. See Appendix E for a 10-year list

of schools.

When learning the how and why of a phenomenon is outside of the researcher's control,

qualitative exploratory research is the preferred method, according to Yin (2013). Lambert and

Lambert (2012) claim that "the goal of qualitative descriptive studies is a comprehensive

summarization, in everyday terms, of specific events experienced by individuals or groups of

individuals" (p. 255). To this end, it is important to engage with the individuals in organizations

that have been involved in the SAES accreditation process.

An invitation was sent out to school leaders via email in July of 2020 inviting them to

participate in a semi-structured interview about their personal experience with the SAES

accreditation process. Twenty-one school leaders responded. Two could not participate due to

scheduling conflicts. Semi-structured interviews were held with 19 school leaders via Zoom or

other electronic meeting platforms.

The request for interviews was sent first via email to those school leaders who had just finished the accreditation cycle and were in Years 1-3 of the current cycle. School leaders (n=19) were sent a link to register for a Zoom meeting and meeting invitations were sent to the leaders 24 hours before the scheduled time. Zoom meetings were held both because of the geographical distance of schools and also because of COVID travel restrictions. Nineteen interviews of 30 to 70 minutes were held using a semi-structured questionnaire (see Appendix B). Questions were based on five basic areas:

- Understanding of the accreditation cycle as a process

- Constraining or limiting effects of accreditation on the school organization

- Enabling or positive effects of accreditation on the school organization

- Examples of organizational learning that occur through the accreditation process

- Brainstorming ideas of improving the accreditation cycle

Fig. 2. Interview Concept Map
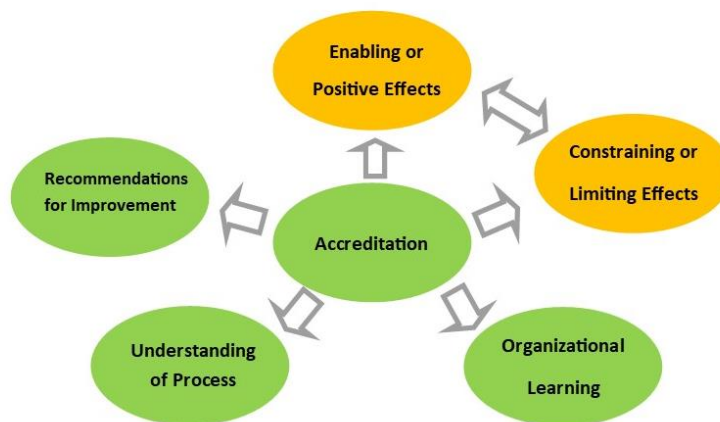
Three of the four staff members of SAES were interviewed at different points throughout a six-month period. The interviews were open-ended and staff members were asked to describe the accreditation process and the perceived advantages and disadvantages the process.

In October of 2020, an invitation to complete a questionnaire specifically about accreditation was sent to all leaders of accredited schools in the SAES to gather more qualitative and some quantitative information. The invitation was distributed via email by the SAES executive director with a request to participate in the survey for the purpose of this research project. A follow-up request was shared through the Diocese of West Texas school leader group. Respondents (n=34 of 83, 40.9 percent) answered open-ended questions and responded to statements using a Likert scale.

The survey was based on results gathered during the interviews and its purpose was twofold. First, the survey was intended to gather more qualitative responses to further inform the research project. Secondly, the survey was intended to gather information about the specific activities that individual schools engage in at different points of the 10-year accreditation cycle in the hope of finding patterns in the activities schools managed at different points of the cycle. Demographic information about the participating school leaders also was collected. Questions asked in the survey can be found in Appendix D.

Data Analysis

Analysis of Current Accreditation Documents

A review of accreditation documents, including a handbook meant to provide direction to member schools, from the Southwestern Association of Episcopal Schools was performed. This provided a reference for the current requirements for accreditation. A link to the documents is included in the Appendix A.

Prior Surveys

SAES also provided three years of prior annual survey results for analysis. While the survey covered a variety of topics, research focused only on the survey items relevant to the accreditation process. The majority of these were statements that were given a Likert score and one was an open-ended response. Likert Scale responses were changed to numbers for the purpose of quantitative analysis. Responses were given a numerical value on a 7-point scale: 1-Very Dissatisfied; 2 – Somewhat Dissatisfied, leaning to Very Dissatisfied; 3 – Somewhat Dissatisfied; 4 – Satisfied, leaning to Somewhat Dissatisfied; 5 – Satisfied; 6 – Satisfied, leaning to Very Satisfied; and 7 – Very Satisfied. The responses to the individual questions specifically regarding accreditation in the 2017 survey data (n=54), 2018 survey data (n=61), and 2019 survey data (n=63) were averaged to achieve an annual average score for each specific question in each year and then averaged again to achieve an overall average score across all three years. These scores were then ranked to look for patterns in the data to answer the research questions posed this in this project.

The open-ended responses by school leaders in the post-visit survey provided by SAES were reviewed to see if the responses correlated with the responses given in the semi-structured interviews.

Semi-structured interviews

The interviews were recorded and transcribed using Otter.ai, an electronic transcription program, and then cleaned individually. These transcriptions (approximately 20 hours) were uploaded into Quirkos for coding. Coding was done using positive and negative coding keywords as well as keywords tied to organizational learning theory and neo-institutional theory (Table 2). From this coding, themes were identified.

Table 2. Coding Keywords

Positive	Negative	Organizational Learning	Recommendations
Enabling	Constraining	Single-loop learning	I wish…
Positive	Negative	Double-loop learning	It would be helpful if…
Helped	Hurt	Continuous improvement	I would rather…
Easiest	Difficult	Long-term change	If it were up to me…
Benefit	Cost	systemic	

Questionnaire

School leaders (n=34) responded to the questionnaire, which was designed to collect demographic data as well as collect information regarding the accreditation experience, including which aspects of accreditation were completed at what point of the 10-year cycle. Statements were evaluated using a Likert Scale and other information was gathered to collect the manner in which individual schools used the 10-year time frame to meet accreditation requirements.

For statements with a Likert Scale, the scale was translated into a numeric value from 1 to 6 and an average score was calculated for each question. Other items were ranked by response percentage.

Findings

Accreditation plays a large and defining role in the trajectory of the schools, according to the respondents in this research project. All respondents said that accreditation was vital to the continuation of their organization and described it positively. When asked during the interview to sum up their experience with the accreditation process in one or two words, twenty-eight

descriptors were volunteered by respondents, and 86 percent of those words were positive (Fig.

3).

Fig. 3. Descriptors of Accreditation Process

1A. Does accreditation have an enabling influence on the organization? If so, how?

Organizational learning theory and evaluative theory suggest that accreditation should have a

positive influence on the organization (Dill, 1999; Giesecke & McNeil, 2004; Elliott, 2010).

During interviews and questionnaires, respondents were asked to determine what effect(s)

accreditation had on their organization.

During the interviews, school leaders expressed feelings of isolation in the daily life of

leadership. As one school leader shared, "It was such an honor to have [the association's

executive director] step in for a day during our re-accreditation process. I didn't know he was

coming. And to me, it felt as though he was saying 'you are a *real* school.' For him to show up at

our doors may seem silly, but it just meant a lot to me that he came."

Unless situated in an urban area, most are the only Episcopal school in the community. They

operate like they exist on a deserted island. The OSV team arrives every ten years or so like a

supply plane bringing in friendly faces and supplies from the mainland and school leaders crave

that interaction. After the OSV team leaves, leaders are once again alone, sending their interim

reports to the Standards Committee like messages in a bottle out to sea, waiting for the

opportunity to have another visit from a team in the next decade. "For the smaller schools, it

would be nice to have some directive or resources so that we could support each other," one

respondent shared. "Providing collaboration between the schools would be extremely helpful to

overall school improvement."

Respondents mentioned over and over the importance of peer review to the accreditation

process. Peer review, either positive or negative, was considered constructive. "I felt like it was it

was a time for growth," one school leader said. "Accreditation was a time for us to explain what

we're doing but then also get feedback for what we can improve or what we can change."

Validating, *helpful*, and *affirming* were the words most often used to describe the OSV.

Respondents spoke of building relationships with other school leaders serving on the OSV team

and the ability to be able to pick up the phone in the future to reach out to others in leadership

positions. This correlates with Halverson's (2010) findings that formative feedback was an

important part of accreditation.

Part of the SAES process is to place school leaders, who will soon have an onsite visit at

their own school, to serve on an OSV team prior to that so that they understand what is expected

during an accreditation visit. Multiple respondents pointed to that experience as not only

enlightening for their own preparations as an organization, but as an affirming method of

professional development. One respondent said, "I think to run a school and to leave it for three

days...it's difficult. It's also liberating because you see that everyone else is in the same boat. The

professional development itself is very good, and it creates bonds and a symbiotic nature where

we continue our relationships [by] picking up the phone and being able to talk to [other school leaders]." This finding mirrors the findings of Boozang (2016) regarding the value of communication between peer organizations when preparing for accreditation.

The professional development opportunities provided throughout the accreditation process were mentioned by many of the respondents. From faculty committees writing the self-study or being able to meet with other school leaders either as part of an OSV team or when an OSV team visited a school, professional development was a key advantage in the entire process. "I think the opportunity for our schools to send people on accreditation visits [as part of an onsite visiting team] is possibly the best professional development that I've ever done as an educator," one respondent reported. Brittingham (2009) also noted the professional development opportunities provided by accreditation are of high quality, mirroring the findings of this project.

Another commonality among responses was that accreditation professionalizes the processes and procedures a school uses to operate while promoting business best practices. The required written procedures and documentation force schools to move forward in certain areas instead of becoming complacent with the status quo. As one interviewee said, "One of the things I didn't appreciate enough about the accreditation process is, if you're a real business, you know, if you're a 'grown-up school,' you should have these formal procedures. And so, okay, let's get this stuff written down." Another school leader said that accreditation reminds one that protocols exist "so you aren't always flying by the seat of your pants." This follows prior research into the needs the organization has of accreditation, as mentioned by Pomey, et al, (2010) and Boozang (2016).

Accreditation affords a level of legitimacy by creating an overarching level of standards that is provided by the process, providing a community of excellent schools by association. "It's nice

to be able to say 'Hey, we're rubbing shoulders with the "big boys"' when we're the little country cousin," one school leader mentioned, "but we're in the same club as these others that are more well known."

This sentiment is backed up by prior research that acknowledges accreditation legitimizes the efforts of organizations in rural areas because they are directly compared to larger entities in urban areas (Pomey, et al., 2010; Wozniak, 2017).

Overall, there were numerous examples of accreditation providing a positive influence on the school organization. Primary among them were the benefits offered through peer review, both in providing constructive feedback and through serving as a form of professional development for those who participated in any part of the process, from self-study to serving as an OSV team member.

1B. Does accreditation promote organizational learning through single-loop and double-loop learning?

There were numerous pieces of data that signified that accreditation does indeed promote organizational learning. In prior SAES surveys, respondents reported the highest levels of satisfaction with the value that the accreditation process provided to schools (see Fig. 4); of particular importance for this research was the perceived reported value of accreditation to promote the improvement of the school experience for students (6.55 out of 7), the value of accreditation to assist in the achievement of strategic goals (6.61), and the value of accreditation to promote growth and improvement of the school (6.65). Findings supporting accreditation as a method of organizational learning, related to Senge's organizational learning theory.

In interviews, school leaders had a much easier time giving examples of single-loop learning, or continuous improvement, in relation to accreditation. These examples covered all areas of

school management: teaching and learning, governance, business practices, and equity, diversity and inclusion. Many credited the self-study as the method of mandating that schools be able to speak to what they truly do instead of what they should do and pointing out areas of weakness that needed to be corrected. One school leader shared this about her experience with the self-study, "I think it's the reflection period, for sure. Because as you are writing and creating the outline to put the piece together, we see it going [one] way. But we need to be actually doing it *this* way. I'm experiencing it as we write it and I can see the weaknesses."

Others remarked that breaking apart the recommendations of the OSV team led to opportunities for improvement. "As educators, we are sort of in the mindset of continually growing and learning more. So for us, this is a fantastic learning opportunity," one respondent said about the recommendations given to his school.

Double-loop learning, or reciprocated learning, between all parts of the organization that leads to a dynamic shift in how things are done, was a more difficult concept for some to grasp but many were still able to provide examples that come from the accreditation process. One respondent mentioned the overhaul of the business office and putting in new procedures that then became ingrained in the daily life of the school, changing how both parents and staff interacted with the business office. Another mentioned Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) initiatives that were recommended by an OSV team and how it has changed the entire focus of their admissions and scholarship process as well as their curriculum.

It is worth noting that those respondents who were positive about the accreditation process as a whole and who did not describe it as overwhelming were more apt to provide examples of systemic double-loop learning, leading to a consideration that leader mindset may play a role in the outcomes of recommendations made by the visiting team.

Ultimately, according to school leaders, the school must be willing to change. "What I see is that accreditation helps you uncover some things that maybe you hadn't seen and allows you then to open up that dialogue about 'is this really what we want?'" one leader said. "But you, as a school, have to be willing to have that dialogue."

Fig. 4 Heat Map of Prior Survey Data (Criteria shown exactly as represented to respondents)

Criteria	2017	2018	2019	Average
Effort Required to Complete Self-Study	6.00	6.23	6.17	6.13
Effort Required to Complete Annual Report	6.23	6.27	6.20	6.24
Effort to Complete Interim Report	6.23	6.31	6.26	6.27
Clarity of Expectiation of Annual Report	6.21	6.43	6.29	6.31
Clarity of Accreditation Standards	6.41	6.41	6.24	6.35
Clarity of Expectations of Self-Study	6.31	6.47	6.30	6.36
Carity of Accreditation Handbook	6.34	6.46	6.28	6.36
Clarity of Expectations of Interim Report	6.48	6.49	6.33	6.43
Clarity of Expectations of OSV	6.35	6.51	6.44	6.43
Overall satisfaction with the SAES accreditation process	6.22	6.62	6.54	6.46
Rigor of OSV	6.46	6.62	6.36	6.48
Rigor of Accreditation Standards	6.51	6.64	6.44	6.53
Value of the accreditation process improving the school experience of your students	6.57	6.54	6.54	6.55
Value of the accreditation process to assist you in achieving your strategic goals with your school	6.56	6.73	6.54	6.61
Value of the accreditation process to promote growth and improvement in your school	6.63	6.72	6.60	6.65
Responsiveness of Accreditation Staff	6.74	6.85	6.71	6.77

1C. Does accreditation have a constraining influence on the organization? If so, how?

Prior survey results (Fig. 4) showed a marked delineation in satisfaction levels based on what was being measured. Although the statements regarding accreditation were grouped by subcategory (Self-study, reports, on-site visit, etc.) on the survey, when regrouped by score, the keywords show a clear pattern. School leaders were least satisfied with the amount of effort required to complete different parts of the accreditation process. Although no annual average was lower than a 6 on a 7-point scale, respondents rated "effort required" statements and "clarity of" statements lowest of all statements regarding accreditation. This is in line with previous research, noting the amount of stress accreditation preparation places on staff (Fryer, 2007; Holland, 2019).

In the follow-up questionnaire, 44 percent of leaders believed that preparing for the accreditation visit took more than 200 man hours; half of those actually estimated the time requirement at more than 300 hours. One interviewee said that the cost of preparing for the visit was "easily two months of payroll" in time and effort. When asked which parts of the accreditation preparation were most overwhelming, 68 percent said preparing the self-study while 68 percent also said balancing preparation with normal school duties. Again, this mirrors the existing research (Vardanyan, 2013) regarding the expenditure of time and effort.

Interestingly, the only person interviewed who did not consider the accreditation visit to be burdensome or overwhelming led a school with more than 1,000 students and 200 employees. All others interviewed lamented about the burden preparing for accreditation placed on the staff and resources of a school.

The focus on practices and procedures, while an enabling influence for many schools, also was seen as a constraining factor because it pulls focus from teaching and learning. "We have

this amazing learning method we use in the classroom, but we didn't really have a chance to

showcase it because so much time and effort is put into making sure you have the right things in

your handbook and your documents are in the right place," one Head of School mentioned.

Finally, the current structure of the 10-year accreditation cycle was seen as a limiter for

schools. As one head of school remarked, "Five years is a long time. Waiting five years before

you have to send in a report can turn a bad idea into a bad habit that becomes ingrained into the

fabric of your school." Another respondent noted that "by Year Nine, I haven't thought about

any recommendations [made by the accreditation team] in years. I probably don't even know

where my [accreditation] report is in my office."

2. *What contextual factors and conditions influence these potential outcomes?*

Three factors seemed to influence the beliefs and outcomes regarding the accreditation

process among school leaders. The first factor was school size. Episcopal schools within the

SAES vary widely in number of students and staff. Schools with a smaller staff (less than 20

employees) tended to use more negative language about the burden placed on schools preparing

for accreditation. Unlike even the smallest universities and colleges, who have at least several

hundred employees, some schools may have less than 12 total employees. *Overwhelming*,

exhausting, and *taxing* were words used to describe the preparation process by leaders with small

staffs. Many spoke of the huge burden they felt personally preparing the self-study because of

the lack of staff members to take the lead on different parts. While those with larger staffs still

felt the burden, they described the process with words like *challenging*, *thorough*, *affirming*, and

reflective.

The type of school played a part in the belief in and understanding of accreditation as well.

Episcopal schools come in many forms, from preschool-only schools to PreK to 12th grade

schools with multiple campuses. Those who ran preschool-only campuses had a very different

perception of the accreditation process than did those that dealt with multiple grade levels. It

should be noted that all of those interviewed who ran preschool-only campuses also were

licensed state daycares. This is required if schools accept children under the age of three.

Daycare licensure is a very different process than school accreditation; however, many school

leaders mentioned licensing procedures in comparison to accreditation procedures and felt more

comfortable with licensing. As one school leader said, "I wish the OSV team would just tell me

what they want to see. With licensing, you know exactly what is expected of you." In contrast,

not one leader of a multi-level school stated that they wished to be told exactly how to operate

their campus.

   The third factor that appeared to influence perceptions regarding accreditation was the role of

governance at the school. Several school leaders mentioned issues with their school's Board of

Trustees and how it impacted preparation for the accreditation visit in addition to how the OSV

report was managed after it was received. Those with boards who did not understand the role of

governance reported struggling with both preparing for accreditation, as the Board has a part to

play in the self-study, and with managing situations after accreditation. Several mentioned that

the governance by-laws required a certain percentage of church members on their board but that

it was becoming more and more difficult to find church members willing to serve on the school's

board. This led to the same people serving year after year or church members who were coerced

to serve but did not have a commitment to the school.

   Finally, SAES states that the goal of accreditation is "both accountability and innovation."

When asked which goal school leaders believed SAES valued most through accreditation, all

nineteen respondents said accountability. As one Head of School said, "Accountability tends to

get in the way of innovation. Because you are so busy trying to make sure that you're doing

everything the way that you need to be doing it, you are not growing in the ways that you could

grow."

Another agreed, saying "Frankly, I don't think accreditation and innovation really have much

to do with each other." Still another respondent felt SAES's accreditation focus during the self-

study was accountability yet noted the recommendations of the OSV report focused more on

innovation.

When asked what they, as school leaders, believed to be more important, the results were not

as clear. "Your gut response is to say accountability," one leader shared. "But in all honesty,

especially in the climate that we are in with schools right now, I think innovation is very, very

important."

Recommendations

SAES oversees 113 schools and accredits 83 of those in six different states. Based on the

data collected and using the CAPs method to improve the accreditation cycle through leveraging

existing strengths in the process, there is a real opportunity to restructure the 10-year

accreditation cycle in a manner that both protects the high standards of SAES and meets the

needs of individual schools. To do this, I have three overarching recommendations:

- Create touchpoints throughout the process to reduce isolation;

- Leverage existing technology to improve both the process and cost efficiency; and

- Focus on innovation throughout both the self-study and the OSV report in addition to the

   need for accountability.

Touchpoints

Many of the principals in the interviews mentioned the isolation that so many schools feel on a regular basis. As both a membership organization and an accrediting body, SAES is uniquely situated to remedy this. The accreditation cycle can be adjusted to **provide feedback and onsite visits at different times throughout the cycle**. This also provides opportunities to improve professional interactions within the organization as a whole. This serves a further purpose for accreditation as well, providing affirmation of the changes that the school has reportedly made because of OSV recommendations. Touchpoints include not only interim reports due to the Standards Committee but also in-person, one-day visits between school leaders to other schools to see what daily life looks like, learn from one another, and verify changes reported in the Interim Report. This recommendation may also satisfy the need for mentoring as noted by Dutton (2015) to be critical in building school leadership capacity.

Interim reports should occur earlier as well. Instead of waiting five years to require an interim report, it is recommended that the interim report occur in Year 3, with an additional interim report in Year 6 for those recommendations which have not been addressed by Year 3.

Touchpoints also need to occur when a new HOS takes the helm of a school. **SAES can and should provide the new HOS with the latest OSV accreditation report**, as many school leaders reported "finding it" in their office months or even years after taking the job. This would provide new leaders with the information they need to be an immediate positive change on their campus.

Finally, SAES can play a bigger role in educating governing boards about their role in the long-term management of the school. SAES's current efforts were highly praised by respondents and a hope that those efforts could be further strengthened and ongoing was vocalized.

Leveraging Technology

Currently, schools have the option of uploading their documents to the Cloud or providing them in a physical box during the onsite visit. In this day and age, there is no reason not to make electronic submission a requirement. By **requiring schools to upload all documents electronically**, onsite team members can preview these before ever setting foot on campus, saving onsite time for observations and interviews. This also follows the research of Hanna, Duvall, Turpin, Pendleton-Romig, & Parker (2016), which recommends the warehousing of all important documents in one central location. Further, the Standards Committee and SAES should consider having the **DAS due in Year 8 or 9 of the accreditation cycle**, allowing time for the school to remedy any discrepancies or missing documentation fully before the OSV.

Managing COVID-era schools has taught us to utilize Skype, Zoom, Google, and a variety of other electronic applications to create meeting opportunities across distance. These same technologies and newer ones as they are introduced should be used to streamline the accreditation process.

Finally, accrediting bodies and other professional organizations (i.e. SAES, National Association of Episcopal Schools (NAES), Independent Schools Association of the Southwest (ISAS), National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS), etc.) should work with one another to share demographic and other information that schools currently must complete and send to multiple organizations in multiple formats. SAES could take the lead in organizing the sharing of data with cooperating organizations.

Innovation

SAES appears to have a good grasp on holding schools accountable to high standards. Now, it needs to focus on promoting innovation in whatever form that may take. SAES is

encouraged to investigate and **incorporate the core values of the adapted education-based Baldrige Model for Excellence into the accreditation self-study** to promote innovation and continuous improvement as a core tenet of accreditation and bring innovation up to the same level of importance as accountability in the 10-year cycle.

In order to meet these recommendations, the following revised 10-year accreditation cycle is proposed:

Fig. 5 Revised Accreditation Cycle

1 Letter of Receipt of Accreditation Report
2 Nothing is required
3 Interim Report Addressing Recommendations
6 Interim Report II (if required)
5 On-Site Visit from HOS Liaison
4 Nothing Required
7 Provide Letter outlining Area of Special Focus
8 Begin Self-Study
9 Upload Documentation of Adherence to Standards (DAS)

Year 10: Full On-Site Visit from Accreditation Team

It is hoped that providing additional touchpoints throughout the 10-year cycle will allow for more collaboration and support for schools. Moving the interim reports from Year 5 to Year 3 allows schools to have a special time to focus on innovation with the Year 7 Special Focus. Moving the due date for the DAS will allow schools an opportunity to remediate any missing policies or documents and free up time for interactive review during the OSV. Basing the self-

study on the Baldrige Model for Excellence will allow SAES to place as much emphasis on innovation as it does on accountability without lessening the level of accountability required. These research-based changes will allow Episcopal schools to continue to provide excellent educational opportunities through the 21st century.

Discussion

It is not clear what the timeline for implementation will be or should be. SAES has a biennial conference that could serve as a method of introducing a revised accreditation cycle or create a wider audience for discussing opportunities and concerns. More work needs to be done to create an infrastructure for collaboration of best practices among schools geographically located in six states. Work is required to incorporate the Baldrige Model of Excellence into the self-study and existing accreditation framework. And finally, work must be done to correct the read or perceived isolation of member schools within SAES.

Conclusion

This capstone study has provided countless opportunities to not only combine research and evidence-based practices to develop options for the host organization but also has allowed me to view my school and my leadership of it differently. As I considered multiple options for recommendation, I also was able to view the issue through two lenses—as a school leader and also as a researcher. Every semester spent in pursuit of my terminal degree has afforded opportunities to apply what I have learned to the benefit of my own organization. I look forward to working with SAES, my partner organization, in incorporating the principles of the Baldrige Model of Excellence into the accreditation self-study and cycle.

References

Alexander, D., Shumway, K., & Gaulden, C. (2008). Using the Baldrige Application Process to Smooth the Road to Excellence and Accreditation. *The Quality Management Forum*, 34(4), 17-20.

Argyris, C. & Schon, D. (1978). *Organizational Learning: A Theory of Action Perspective. Reading*, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley Publishing Co.

Bassett, P. F. (2004). Accountability and independence for schools: Towards a higher standard. *National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS),* 1-3.

Boddy, D. (2008). *Management* (Fourth edition ed.). Pearson Education Limited.

Boje, D. (2010). Side shadowing appreciative inquiry: One storyteller's commentary. *Journal of Management Inquiry*, 19(3), 238-241.

Boozang, W. (2016). *Regional accreditation's impact on institutional change* (Order No. 10094566). Available from ProQuest Central; ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global; Social Science Premium Collection. (1780296475).

Brittingham, B. (2009). Accreditation in the United States: How did we get to where we are? *New Directions for Higher Education, 40(5),* 32-38. doi:10.3200/CHNG.40.5.32-39

Browne, B. (2008). *What is appreciative inquiry? Crafting appreciative questions*. Imagine, Chicago.

Burris, R. T. (2008). *An analysis of accreditation processes, quality control criteria, historical events, and student performance* (Order No. AAI3319230). Available from APA PsycInfo®. (621760884; 2008-99230-067).

Carnoy, M. (2005). Globalization, educational trends and the open society. *Education and open society: a critical look at new perspectives and demands.* Open Society Institute

Education Conference.

Casey, L. (2018). *An appreciative inquiry research study to design an elementary principal mentoring model* (Order No. 10748033). Available from ProQuest Central; ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global; Social Science Premium Collection. (2059333348).

Cooper, J., Ponder, G., Merritt, S, & Matthews, C. (2005). High-performing high schools: Patterns of success. *NASSP Bulletin,* 59(645), 2-23.

Crossan, M, Lane, H., and White, R. (1999). An organizational learning framework from intuition to institution. *Academy of Management Review, 24(3),* 522-537.

Cooperrider, D and Srivastva, S. (1987). Appreciative inquiry in organizational life. In RW Woodman and WA Passmore (eds) *Research in Organizational Change and Development* Vol. 1. Stanford, CT:JAI Press, 129-269.

Cooperrider, D., and Whitney, D. (2000). A positive revolution in change: Appreciative inquiry. Appreciative Inquiry: Rethinking human organization towards a positive theory of change, 3-26. Champaign, IL:Stipes Publishing, LLC

Cooperrider, D., Whitney, D., and Stavros, J. (2008). *Appreciative Inquiry Handbook* (2nd ed.) Brunswick: Crown Custom Publishing.

Dill, D. D. (1999). Academic accountability and university adaptation: The architecture of an academic learning organization. *Higher education*, *38*, 127-154.

DiMaggio, P. J., & Powell, W. W. (1991). Introduction. In W. W. Powell & P. J. DiMaggio (Eds.), The new institutionalism in organizational analysis (pp. 1-38). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Dutton, J. E. (2015). *Mentoring and leadership development of independent K-12 administrators and leaders: Exploring practices, support, and barriers* (Doctoral dissertation, Capella University).

Ehren, M., & Visscher, A. (2008). The relationship between school inspections, school characteristics and school improvement. *British Journal of Educational Studies, 56(2),*205-227. doi: 10.111 l/j.l467-8527.2008.00400.x

Elliott, C. (2013). The impact of AACSB accreditation: A multiple case study of Canadian university business schools. *Canadian Journal of Administrative Sciences/Revue Canadienne des Sciences de l'Administration*, *30*(3), 203-218.

Fertig, M. (2007). International school accreditation: Between a rock and a hard place? Journal of Research in International Education, 6(3), 333–348. https://doi.org/10.1177/1475240907083199

Flores, A. (2015, December 14). Hooked on Accreditation: A Historical Perspective. Retrieved March 17, 2021, from https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/education-postsecondary/reports/2015/12/14/127200/hooked-on-accreditation-a-historical-perspective/

Furst-Bowe, J. A., & Bauer, R. A. (2007). Application of the Baldrige model for innovation in higher education. *New directions for higher education*, *2007*(137), 5-14.

Fryer, S. (2007). *Accreditation and accountability processes in California high schools: A case study.* (Doctoral dissertation). University of Southern California, Los Angeles.

Garvin, D. A. (1993). Building a learning organization. *Harvard Business Review*, *71*(4), 378-391.

Geppert, M. (2000). *Beyond the learning organisation: Paths of organisational learning in the East German context.* Hampshire, England: Gower Publishing Ltd

Goh, S. C., Cousins, J. B., & Elliott, C. (2006). Organizational learning capacity, evaluative inquiry and readiness for change in schools: Views and perceptions of educators. *Journal of Educational Change*, *7*(4), 289-318.

Grant, S. (2007). Learning through 'being' and 'doing'. Action Research, 5(3), 265-274.

Grant, S., & Humphries, M. (2006). Critical evaluation of appreciative inquiry. *Action Research, 4*(4), 401-418.

Halverson, R. (2010). Mapping the terrain of interim assessments: School formative feedback systems. *Peabody Journal of Education, 85(2),* 130-146. doi: 10.1080/01619561003685270

Hanna, K., Duvall, J., Turpin, R. L., Pendleton-Romig, K., & Parker, S. (2016). Mastering the Journey to Continuous Compliance: Process Improvements for Excelling at CCNE Accreditation. *SAGE Open*. https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244016656231

Hanson, M. (2001). Institutional theory and educational change. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 37(5), 637-661.

Holland, C. T. (2019). *A qualitative investigation of independent school educators' lived experiences with PreK-12 accreditation* (Order No. 13813900). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (2209756103).

Hosking, D. M., & van der Haar, D. (2004). Evaluating appreciative inquiry: A relational constructionist perspective. *Human Relations, 57*(8), 1017-1036.

Isabella, S. A. (2015). *Internal influential factors affecting accreditation processes in small universities: A conceptual framework based on the case of Curaçao*. Regional

Conference on Institutionalising Best Practice in Higher Education, UWI, St. Augustine, Trinidad and Tobago.

Leist, J., Gilman, S., Cullen, R., & Sklar, J. (2004). Using Baldrige criteria to meet or exceed accreditation council for continuing medical education standards. *Journal of Continuing Education in the Health Professions*, 24(1), 57-63.

Lejeune, C. (2011). Is continuous improvement through accreditation sustainable? *Management Decision, 49*(9), 1535-1548.

Lewis, S., Passmore, J., and Cantore, S. (2008). Appreciative Inquiry for Change Management. London:Kogan Page.

Little, C. S. (2020). *Lived experiences in accreditation: The influence of accreditation decisions on change implementation* (Order No. AAI27671812). Available from APA PsycInfo®. (2387756292; 2020-17189-064).

Lynch, D. K. (2018). *The cost of the accreditation process: A case study of north carolina community colleges* (Order No. 10969843). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (2092079760).

Milway, K. and Saxton, A. (2011). The challenge of organizational learning. *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, 44-49.

Meyer, J., Scott, W., & Deal, T. (1992). Institutional and technical sources of organizational structure: Explaining the structure of educational organizations. In J. W. Meyer & W. R. Scott (Eds.), *Organizational environments: Ritual and rationality* (pp. 45-67). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Lambert, V. A., & Lambert, C. E. (2012). Qualitative descriptive research: An acceptable design. *Pacific Rim International Journal of Nursing Research*, 16(4), 255-256.

Lynch, D. K. (2018). *The cost of the accreditation process: A case study of north carolina*

    community colleges (Order No. 10969843). Available from ProQuest Dissertations &

    Theses Global. (2092079760).

Oldham, J. (2018). K-12 Accreditation's Next Move. *Education Next*; *Cambridge*, 18(1). -

    ProQuest. (n.d.). Retrieved March 7, 2020, from https://search-proquest-

    com.proxy.library.vanderbilt.edu/docview/2123679802?rfr_id=info%3Axri%2Fsid%3Ap

    rimo

Olson, A. (2016). *The accreditation-related self-study and its potential for organizational*

    learning: a comparative case study. (Doctoral dissertation). University of Pennsylvania.

Preskill, H. (1994). Evaluation's role in enhancing organizational learning: A model for

    practice. *Evaluation and program planning*, *17*(3), 291-297.

Preskill, H., & Torres, R. T. (1999). *Evaluative inquiry for learning in organizations*. Sage.

Pomey, M., Lemieux-Charles, L., Champagne, F., Angus, D., Shabah, A., & Contandriopoulos,

    A. (2010). Does accreditation stimulate change? A study of the impact of the

    accreditation process on Canadian healthcare organizations. *Implementation Science, 5*,

    31. doi:http://dx.doi.org.proxy.library.vanderbilt.edu/10.1186/1748-5908-5-31

Ridley-Duff, R., & Duncan, G. (2015). What is critical appreciation? insights from studying the

    critical turn in an appreciative inquiry. *Human Relations, 68*(10), 1579-1599.

Roland, T. (2011). *Exploration of the accreditation self-study process from the perspectives of*

    organizational effectiveness. (Doctoral dissertation). Pepperdine University, Malibu.

Scott, W. R. (2001). *Institutions and organizations (2nd ed.).* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage

    Publications.

Serafin, M. (2014). *Accreditation follow-up: A grounded theory qualitative study of WASC-accredited private schools in Southern California*. (Doctoral dissertation). University of Southern California.

Senge, P. M. (1990). *The fifth discipline.* New York: Doubleday

Senge, P. M. (2006). *The fifth discipline: The art and practice of the learning organization*. Currency.

Shannon, G.S. & Bylsma, P. (2007). *The nine characteristics of high-performing schools: a research-based resource for schools and districts to assist with improving student learning. (2nd Ed.).* Olympia, WA: OSPI.

Thibodeau, J. (2011). *Appreciative accreditation: A mixed methods explanatory study of appreciative inquiry-based institutional effectiveness results in higher education* (Order No. 3444288).

Ulmer, P. G. (2015). *Accreditation outcome scores: Teacher attitudes toward the accreditation process and professional development* (Order No. 10017012). Available from ProQuest Central; ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global

Vardanyan, K. (2013). *The significance of national association for the education of young children accreditation in elevating quality of early childhood education: Administrators', teachers', and parents' beliefs about accreditation and its process* (Order No. 3610170). Available from ProQuest Central; ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global; Social Science Premium Collection. (1498140002).

Vital, M., Boland, R., and Cooperrider, D. (eds.) (2008). *Designing Information and Organizations with a Positive Lens*, Vol. 2. Oxford: Elsevier.

Watkins, J., and Mohr, B. (2001). *Appreciative Inquiry: Change at the Speed of Imagination*.

      San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Whitney, D. (1998). Let's change the subject and change our organization: An appreciative

      inquiry approach to organization change. *Career Development International, 3*(7), 314.

      doi:http://dx.doi.org.proxy.library.vanderbilt.edu/10.1108/13620439810240746

Wozniak, E. (2017). *Independent school accreditation and the learning organization*. (Doctoral

      dissertation). Cardinal Stritch University, Milwaukee.

Yin, R. K. (2013). Validity and generalization in future case study

      evaluations. *Evaluation*, *19*(3), 321-332.

APPENDIX A- Link to SAES Accreditation Resources

Link to SAES Accreditation Resources

https://www.swaes.org/accreditation/resources.cfm

APPENDIX B – SAES Annual Head of School Survey

SAES Annual Head of School Survey

1. Please enter your name and school.

2. The mission of SAES is to lead, nurture, and unify Episcopal schools in order to advance educational excellence within the faith community of the Episcopal Church. Our programs reflect our mission. How would you rate your satisfaction with the following SAES programs? If you are not familiar with or have not utilized these programs, please mark N/A.

	Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied, leaning to very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied, leaning toward dissatisfied	Satisfied	Satisfied, leaning towards very satisfied	Very satisfied	N/A
Biennial Conference (odd-numbered years)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Heads Meeting (every Fall; either stand-alone or in connection with Biennial)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
New Heads Monthly Video Conferences	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Leadership and Governance Workshop (2-3 times each year)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Early Learning Conference (every summer)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Consultation services (board training, vestry training, strategic planning, feasibility studies, etc)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Webinars	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

3. Please share any thoughts relating to how you reached the rankings for the above-listed programs. Also, please share any feedback you may have relating to the effectiveness of these programs.

4. Regarding our accreditation services, how pleased are you with the following aspects of accreditation? If your school is not accredited with SAES, please skip this section.

	Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied, leaning towards very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied, leaning towards dissatisfied	Satisfied	Satisfied, leaning towards very satisfied	Very satisfied
Clarity of accreditation standards	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Rigor of accreditation standards	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Clarity of the Accreditation Handbook	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Clarity of expectations for the self-study	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Effort required to complete the self-study	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Clarity of the expectations for the on-site visit	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Rigor of the on-site visit	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Clarity of expectations for the interim report	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Effort required to complete the interim report	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Clarity of expectations for the annual report	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Effort required to complete the annual report	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Responsiveness of the SAES accreditation staff	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Value of the accreditation process to promote growth and improvement in your school	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Value of the accreditation process to assist you in achieving your strategic goals with your school	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Value of the accreditation process improving the school experience of your students	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Overall satisfaction with the SAES accreditation process	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

5. The Standards Committee of SAES oversees the accreditation process. Do you have any feedback to share with that committee relating to your answers or to the overall value, effectiveness, and helpfulness of accreditation?

6. As a member, how do you characterize the strengths of SAES?

7. As a member, how do you characterize the areas for improvement for SAES?

8. How happy are you about the value of services you receive for your membership dues (and accreditation fees, if applicable)?

| 0 | 50 | 100 |

9. How happy are you about the value of services you receive for our events (Heads Meeting, Biennial Conference, Leadership and Governance Workshops, Early Learning Conference, Webinars, etc)?

| 0 | 50 | 100 |

10. Are there programs or services that you wished SAES would provide even though they are not offered currently?

11. Are there any other comments or feedback you would like to share with the staff and leadership of SAES?

APPENDIX C – SAES Post Onsite Visit Survey

SAES Post Onsite Visit Survey

1. What is the name of your School?

2. What were the SAES On-Site Visit dates?

Date / Time

Date

MM/DD/YYYY

3. Who was the SAES On-Site Visiting Team Leader for your On-Site Visit?

4. Who was the SAES Representative who participated on this visit?

5. The accreditation process begins with the school's preparation of Documents in Adherence to Standards, followed by a Self-Study, followed by an On-Site Visiting Team coming to campus. Were the process, timeline, and requirements of accreditation clearly and completely presented to you?

6. Was assistance readily available to you as you moved from step to step in the process?

7. Did you find the SAES Accreditation Handbook helpful as you moved through the accreditation process?

8. Did you find the final meeting with the On-Site Visiting Team Leader and the SAES Representative helpful in giving you a preview of the major topics covered in the final SAES On-Site Visiting Team Report?
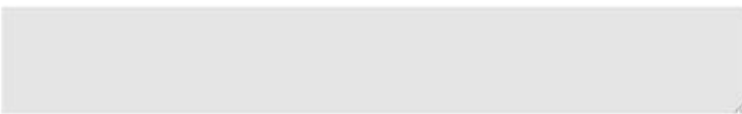
9. Reflecting on the whole accreditation process, how could the process be improved?

10. Having completed the Self Study, how might this part of the accreditation process be improved to make it a more effective instrument for school improvement?

11. Please comment on your overall experience with the On-Site Visit. What, if anything, would have improved this experience for the school?

12. Please comment on the general conduct of the On-Site Visiting Team. Are you aware of any meetings, observations done by team members, or interactions that were either particularly positive or especially problematic? What was the general reaction of the faculty and staff to the visit?

13. Please evaluate the work of the SAES On-Site Visiting Team Leader and the SAES Team Representative in support of this visit.

14. Was the size of the OSV team: (Select one)

15. Please feel free to include additional comments below.

16. Please include your name and the date below.

Name

Date

Done

Powered by

SurveyMonkey

See how easy it is to create a survey.

APPENDIX D – Interview Guide

Interview Guide

Introduction

- Thank the participant for agreeing to be involved.
- Explain the purpose of the research
- Review informed consent, ask about recording the meeting and have letter signed and returned.

Q A. Context and Demographic Information

QA.1 To get started, I would like to learn a bit more about your school and your experience as a Head of School. What ages do you serve? How long have you been at this school? When was your last accreditation? Were you employed here during the last accreditation visit? What year is this in your current accreditation cycle?

QA.2 Think back to preparing for that accreditation visit. What aspects of preparing for that visit took the most time and attention? Which took the least?

QA.3 Have there been any major events that have taken place during this accreditation cycle that will change your preparation for the next accreditation visit? Please elaborate.

QB Accreditation

QB.1 What words would you use to describe the accreditation process?

QB.2 I'm interested in this accreditation cycle. Can you please walk me through how you prepared for this accreditation?

- Who was involved?
- Main actions
- Main outcomes

QB.3 What has been your level of involvement in the accreditation process during this period of the cycle?

QB.4 What other stakeholder groups were involved? How were they involved?

QB.5 Please explain the 10-year accreditation cycle to me as you recognize it to be.

QC Consequences of Accreditation – Enabling

QC.1 SAES states that the primary goals of accreditation are both accountability and innovation. Which do you feel is most important to SAES? Why? Which is most important to you as a leader? Why?

QC.2 Do you believe that accreditation is used as a vehicle for continuous improvement?

QC.3 If yes, can you provide some examples of positive incremental changes that you have made due to the process? When did they occur, or when did you notice them**?** If no, please explain.

QC.4 Organizational learning refers to both incremental change and to "double loop" learning, which involves a more dramatic change in mindset—questioning the underlying paradigm or values on which programs or decisions might be based. Taking this improvement theme one step further, does accreditation promote organizational learning?

QC.5 If yes, can you provide some examples. If no, please explain.

QC.6 Which parts of the accreditation process provide the most opportunity for ongoing organizational learning to the applicant schools?

QC.7 How could the SAES accreditation cycle be improved for your school in order to promote more learning? (i.e. what factors would help to facilitate the process? What are the main barriers?)

QD Consequences – Constraining

QD.1 Have you found that, in any way, the accreditation process is constraining? (e.g. for decision-making, managing your operations, are there certain things you would like to do differently by can't)

QD.2 Which parts of the accreditation cycle, if any, were of little benefit to your organization?

QD.3 How would you describe the degree of formalization that you have had in your business practices and procedures? (i.e., the extent to which practices are formalized in explicit, written policies, procedures, etc.)

QD.4 Has this changed as a result of a recent accreditation cycle?

QD.5 Do you believe that there were any parts of the accreditation process that were overwhelming for your organization?

QD.6 Overall, on the whole, do you feel that accreditation is "enabling" or "constraining"? (i.e. where does the balance tip?)

QE Cost/Benefit

QE.1 What do you see as the main benefits that you have derived from accreditation?

QE.2 What do you think is the cost in dollars and time devoted to SAES and the accreditation process?

QE.3 Do you think that accreditation adds to your school's legitimacy in any way?

QE.4 Please explain.

QF Improvement

QF.1 Can the 10-year accreditation cycle be arranged differently to provide more opportunities for continuous organizational improvement to the applicant schools? How?

QF.2 Could the accreditation process be changed to promote a culture of continuous organizational learning and improvement? If so, how?

QF.3 How would you rate the 10-year length of an accreditation cycle?
    Too Long   Just Right   Should Be Longer

QG Other Comments

QG.1 Is there anything else that you would like to add? (What other comments or questions do you have regarding SAES accreditation at your school and its impact?)

Thank you for contributing to this research!

(Interview questions adapted from *Understanding the context, impacts and consequences of accreditation on Canadian university business schools*, C.J. Elliott (2010*))

APPENDIX E – SAES Accreditation Visit 10-Year Schedule

2009-2010
Epiphany New Iberia
Holy Spirit Houston
St. Michael's Tucson
St. Stephen's Wimberley

2010-2011
Grace Monroe
St. James Del Rio
St. John's Abilene
St. Mark's Austin
St. Matthew's Edinburgh
TMI (ISAS)
Trinity Marshall

2011-2012
All Saints Phoenix (ISAS)
Bishop Noland Lake Charles
Good Shepherd Austin
St. Andrew's Austin (ISAS)
St. Mark's Shreveport

2012-2013
Ascension Houston
Christ Covington (ISAS)
St. John's Dallas (ISAS)
St. Luke's Baton Rouge
St. Martin's Metairie (ISAS)
St. Paul's New Orleans (ISAS)
Trinity Austin (ISAS)
Trinity Baton Rouge
Trinity Galveston (ISAS)

2013-2014
Ascension Lafayette (SAIS)
Holy Trinity Houston
Imago Dei Tucson
St. Cyprian's Lufkin
St. David's San Antonio
St. Mary's Edmond
St. Stephen's Houston (AMS)

2014-2015
St. Luke's San Antonio (ISAS)

2015-2016
Oak Hall Ardmore
St. Christopher's Killeen
St. Philip's Uvalde

SAES ACCREDITED SCHOOLS

2016-17
Good Shepherd Kingwood
St. Mark's Houston (ISAS)
St. Matthew's Austin
St. Paul's San Antonio
St. Stephen's Austin (ISAS)
St. Thomas Houston

2017-2018

All Saints Austin

All Saints Tyler (ISAS)

Calvary Bastrop

Christ Church Paradise Valley

Episcopal Baton Rouge (SAIS)

Grace Georgetown

Holy Spirit Dripping Springs

St. Andrew's Houston

St. James Baton Rouge

St. Thomas the Apostle Houston

Trinity The Woodlands

Trinity Victoria

2018-2019

All Saints Beaumont

All Saints Fort Worth (ISAS)

All Saints Lubbock

Calvary Richmond

Good Shepherd Dallas (ISAS)

Parish Dallas (ISAS)

St. Alban's Harlingen

St. James Corpus

St. Michael Dallas

St. Thomas ELC College Station

St. Thomas San Antonio

Trinity Longview

2019-2020

Christ Episcopal Nacogdoches

Episcopal Collegiate LR (SAIS)

Episcopal Day Brownsville

St. Andrew's Amarillo

St. Francis Houston (ISAS)

St. Francis Temple

St. George San Antonio

St. James Dallas

St. James Texarkana

St. John's McAllen

St. John's Odessa

St. Mary's Bellville

St. Paul's Waco

St. Richard's Round Rock

APPENDIX F – SAES Accreditation Impact Questionnaire

SAES Accreditation Impact Survey

Demographic Information

The purpose of this survey is to explore accreditation experiences among Heads of School within the Southwestern Association of Episcopal School. Please note that your participation in completing this survey is voluntary. Your confidentiality is guaranteed.

1. Gender

○ Male

○ Female

I prefer not to answer.

2. Your age is:

○ 18-24

○ 25-34

○ 35-44

3. Highest degree earned:

○ Bachelor's degree

○ Master's degree

○ Ed.D. or Ph.D. ○ Other

4. How long have you worked in K12 education?

○ 0-2 years

○ 3-5 years

○ 5-10 years

11-15 years

○ 45-54

○ 55-64

○ 65+

○ 15-20years

○ 20-30years

○ more than 30 years

5. How many years (if any) have you worked in public K12 education?

○ I have never worked in public K12 education.

○ one month to 2 years

○ 3-5 years

○ 6-10 years

○ 11-15years

○ 16-20years

○ more than 20 years

6. How many years have you worked in private K12 education?

◯ 0-2 years

◯ 3-5 years

◯ 6-10 years

◯ 11-15 years

◯ 16-20 years

◯ 20-30 years

◯ more than 30 years

7. How many years have you worked in Episcopal K12 education?

◯ 0-2 years

◯ 3-5 years

◯ 6-10 years

◯ 11-15 years

◯ 16-20 years

◯ 20-30 years

◯ More than 30 years

8. How long have your served in your current position at this school?

◯ 0-2 years

◯ 3-5 years

◯ 6-10 years

◯ 11-15 years

◯ 16-20 years

◯ more than 20 years

9. I was employed at this school during the last accreditation visit.

○ Yes

○ No

10. Year of your school's last accreditation visit:

○
○ 2019-2020   ○ 2014-2015
○ 2018-2019   ○ 2013-2014
○ 2017-2018   ○ 2012-2013
○ 2016-2017   ○ 2011-2012
   2015-2016   2010-2011

SAES Accreditation Impact Survey

11. How many accreditation cycle/visits have you been involved in?

○ only one

○ 2-3

○ 4-5

○ More than 5

12. I was employed at THIS school during its last accreditation visit.

○ Yes

○ No

13. I have participated in the writing of a self-study for accreditation.

Prior Accreditation Experience

○ Yes

○ No

14. I have been trained to serve on an On Site Visit Team.

○ Yes

○ No

15. I have served on an On Site Visit Team.

○ Yes

○ No

16. Please answer the following:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
The SAES accreditation handbook was easy to read and understand.	○	○	○	○	○	○
Accreditation standards and expectations were made clear.	○	○	○	○	○	
I felt adequately trained to lead the accreditation process at my school.	○	○	○	○	○	○
SAES provided adequate assistance throughout the process.	○	○	○	○	○	
The self-study was a collaborative staff effort.	○	○	○	○	○	○

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
The accreditation process is necessary to ensure educational quality in our school.	○	○	○	○	○	○
The accreditation process is necessary to ensure that Episcopal schools maintain the highest possible academic and faith- based standards.	○	○	○	○	○	○
Our school was confidently prepared for the onsite visit.	○	○	○	○	○	
Preparation for the accreditation visit was easy to fit into our daily schedule.	○	○	○	○	○	○
I have participated in preparing a Year 5 Interim report and found it "doable."	○	○	○	○	○	○
The accreditation process is too time- intensive for school staff.	○	○	○	○	○	○
Meeting the accreditation standards is too difficult for my school given the available resources.	○	○	○	○	○	○
My perception of the accreditation process changed after I experienced it.	○	○	○	○	○	○

17. I believe a 10-year accreditation cycle is:

○ too long

○ Just the right length

○ too short

18. I find the 10-year cycle to be (please check all that apply):

☐ beneficial for making short-term changes

☐ beneficial for making long-term changes

☐ too long to promote continuous school improvement

☐ beneficial for helping the school continue to improve throughout the 10 years.

SAES Accreditation Impact Survey

Actions in Each Year of Accreditation

Please check all that apply during each year of accreditation.

19. During Year 1 of our school accreditation, we:

☐ Sent a Head of School letter to SAES

☐ Submitted interim or special interim report

☐ Updated/changed governance bylaws

☐ Worked to improve customer/public relations

☐ Updated/changed the student handbook

☐ Updated/changed the employee handbook

☐ Updated/changed employment contracts

☐ Updated/changed curriculum

☐ Updated/changed chapel services or worship

☐ Created new standing committees among the staff/faculty

☐ Created new standing committees at the governance level

☐ Changed the school mission or vision

☐ Wrote/updated crisis plan

☐ Wrote/updated strategic plan

☐ Wrote/updated strategic finance plan

☐ Wrote/Updated board policy book

☐ Reviewed OSV recommendations

☐ Reviewed OSV suggestions

☐ Other (please specify)

20. During Years 2-4 of our school accreditation, we:

☐ Sent a Head of School letter to SAES

☐ Submitted interim or special interim report

☐ Updated/changed governance bylaws

☐ Worked to improve customer/public relations

☐ Updated/changed the student handbook

☐ Updated/changed the employee handbook

☐ Updated/changed employment contracts

☐ Updated/changed curriculum

☐ Updated/changed chapel services or worship

☐ Other (please specify)

☐ Created new standing committees among the staff/faculty

☐ Created new standing committees at the governance level

☐ Changed the school mission or vision

☐ Wrote/updated crisis plan

☐ Wrote/updated strategic plan

☐ Wrote/updated strategic finance plan

☐ Wrote/Updated board policy book

☐ Reviewed OSV recommendations

☐ Reviewed OSV suggestions

21. During Year 5 of our school accreditation, we:

☐ Sent a Head of School letter to SAES

☐ Submitted interim or special interim report

☐ Updated/changed governance bylaws

☐ Worked to improve customer/public relations

☐ Updated/changed the student handbook

☐ Updated/changed the employee handbook

☐ Updated/changed employment contracts

☐ Updated/changed curriculum

☐ Updated/changed chapel services or worship

☐ Other (please specify)

☐ Created new standing committees among the staff/faculty

☐ Created new standing committees at the governance level

☐ Changed the school mission or vision

☐ Wrote/updated crisis plan

☐ Wrote/updated strategic plan

☐ Wrote/updated strategic finance plan

☐ Wrote/Updated board policy book

☐ Reviewed OSV recommendations

☐ Reviewed OSV suggestions

22. During Years 6-8 of our school accreditation, we:

☐ Sent a Head of School letter to SAES

☐ Submitted interim or special interim report

☐ Updated/changed governance bylaws

☐ Worked to improve customer/public relations

☐ Updated/changed the student handbook

☐ Updated/changed the employee handbook

☐ Updated/changed employment contracts

☐ Updated/changed curriculum

☐ Updated/changed chapel services or worship

☐ Other (please specify)

☐ Created new standing committees among the staff/faculty

☐ Created new standing committees at the governance level

☐ Changed the school mission or vision

☐ Wrote/updated crisis plan

☐ Wrote/updated strategic plan

☐ Wrote/updated strategic finance plan

☐ Wrote/Updated board policy book

☐ Reviewed OSV recommendations

☐ Reviewed OSV suggestions

23. During Year 9 of our school accreditation, we:

☐ Sent a Head of School letter to SAES

☐ Submitted interim or special interim report

☐ Updated/changed governance bylaws

☐ Worked to improve customer/public relations

☐ Updated/changed the student handbook

☐ Updated/changed the employee handbook

☐ Updated/changed employment contracts

☐ Updated/changed curriculum

☐ Updated/changed chapel services or worship

☐ Other (please specify)

☐ Created new standing committees among the staff/faculty

☐ Created new standing committees at the governance level

☐ Changed the school mission or vision

☐ Wrote/updated crisis plan

☐ Wrote/updated strategic plan

☐ Wrote/updated strategic finance plan

☐ Wrote/Updated board policy book

☐ Reviewed OSV recommendations

☐ Reviewed OSV suggestions

24. During Year 10 of our school accreditation, we:

☐ Sent a Head of School letter to SAES

☐ Submitted interim or special interim report

☐ Updated/changed governance bylaws

☐ Worked to improve customer/public relations

☐ Updated/changed the student handbook

☐ Updated/changed the employee handbook

☐ Updated/changed employment contracts

☐ Updated/changed curriculum

☐ Updated/changed chapel services or worship

☐ Other (please specify)

☐ Created new standing committees among the staff/faculty

☐ Created new standing committees at the governance level

☐ Changed the school mission or vision

☐ Wrote/updated crisis plan

☐ Wrote/updated strategic plan

☐ Wrote/updated strategic finance plan

☐ Wrote/Updated board policy book

☐ Reviewed OSV recommendations

☐ Reviewed OSV suggestions

SAES Accreditation Impact Survey

---

25. As a result of our last accreditation visit, the following were strengthened:

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
the mission and vision of the school	○	○	○	○	○	○
goals of the school	○	○	○	○	○	○
our Episcopal identity	○	○	○	○	○	○
our community service learning	○	○	○	○	○	○
diversity of student body	○	○	○	○	○	○

26. Since the last accreditation visit occurred:

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
parent communication has improved	○	○	○	○	○	○
parent relations have improved	○	○	○	○	○	○
parent education programs have improved	○	○	○	○	○	○
staff diversity has improved	○	○	○	○	○	○
commitment to service learning has improved	○	○	○	○	○	○
the school has become better known in the community	○	○	○	○	○	
the school enjoys more support from the rector and/or church	○	○	○	○	○	○
there is better support from the governing body	○	○	○	○	○	○
there is better support from the PTO/parent organization	○	○	○	○	○	○
there are better opportunities for professional development	○	○	○	○	○	○
fundraising in general has improved	○	○	○	○	○	○
annual giving has improved	○	○	○	○	○	○
Grant monies/funding has improved	○	○	○	○	○	○

27. After the last accreditation visit occurred:

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
resources are allocated for school needs	○	○	○	○	○	○
the work environment improved	○	○	○	○	○	○
employee morale improved	○	○	○	○	○	○
administration focuses attention on school needs	○	○	○	○	○	○
school is focused on accreditation recommendations	○	○	○	○	○	○
administration leads school improvement efforts	○	○	○	○	○	○
school goals and objectives are reviewed frequently	○	○	○	○	○	○
collaborative planning improved	○	○	○	○	○	○
the strategic plan has been updated	○	○	○	○	○	○
professional conversations increased	○	○	○	○	○	○
staff relations/communications has improved	○	○	○	○	○	○
learning initiatives have improved	○	○	○	○	○	○

28. Following the last accreditation visit:

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
campus technology has improved	○	○	○	○	○	○
counseling services are more available	○	○	○	○	○	○
we receive proportionate share monies from the local education district/agency	○	○	○	○	○	○
library usage has increased	○	○	○	○	○	○
health services have improved	○	○	○	○	○	○
extracurricular programs have increased	○	○	○	○	○	○
physical facilities have improved	○	○	○	○	○	○
school safety has improved	○	○	○	○	○	○

29. Since the last accreditation visit:

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
teaching methods have improved	○	○	○	○	○	○
teaching is student-centered	○	○	○	○	○	○
interactive learning has increased	○	○	○	○	○	○
small-group learning has increased	○	○	○	○	○	○
students are challenged	○	○	○	○	○	○
learning is individualized	○	○	○	○	○	○
critical thinking skills are practiced	○	○	○	○	○	○
instruction is data-driven	○	○	○	○	○	○
curriculum is vertically aligned	○	○	○	○	○	○
curriculum follows a scope and sequence	○	○	○	○	○	○
individual learning styles are addressed	○	○	○	○	○	○
students are aware of academic expectations	○	○	○	○	○	○

SAES Accreditation Impact Survey

Costs and Benefits of the Accreditation Process

This is your opportunity to share what worked and what didn't before, during, and after the accreditation visit.

30. Preparing for the accreditation visit:

○ Was overwhelming in many ways

○ Brought periods of overwhelming tasks

○ Was a hurdle to clear during the course of the year

○ Was not an issue for my staff

31. These were the areas that seemed overwhelming for our school: (select all that apply)

☐ Staff willingness to help prepare

☐ Managing required documentation

☐ Preparing self-study

☐ Willingness of board members to complete the governance portion

☐ Preparing required financial documentation

☐ Preparing missing pieces of required documentation

☐ Balancing preparation with regular school duties

☐ Updating governance policies

☐ Preparing/updating legal documents

☐ Finding enough hours in the day to adequately prepare

☐ Preparing for the on-site visit

☐ Our school was not overwhelmed at any point in the process.

☐ Other (please specify)

[   ]

32. Our overall experience with the accreditation process was:

○ Excellent

○ Challenging but worthwhile

○ Neutral

○ Difficult with little reward

33. To pay for the accreditation visit, our school:

○ Works it into the budget for that year

○ Annualizes the costs over a 10-year period

○ Depends on a donation from a wealthy benefactor

○ Other (please specify)

[   ]

34. I believe preparing for an accreditation visit and all that is required in the accreditation process takes:

○ 0-50 total man hours

○ 51-100 total man hours

○ 100-150 total man hours

○ 151-200 total man hours

○ 200-300 total man hours

More than 300 man hours

○

SAES Accreditation Impact Survey

35. What do you believe are weaknesses in the SAES accreditation process?

36. What do you see as strengths in the accreditation process?

37. What are your feelings about the 10-year accreditation cycle?

38. Would you change anything about how the accreditation cycle is structured?

39. What types of support from SAES would be beneficial for your school?

40. Can you share an example of how the accreditation process created a positive impact on your school?

41. Do you have any other questions or comments about the accreditation cycle that have not been addressed? If so, please comment below.