



Accreditation and Monitoring: A Sample Inventory of Policies, Programs and Research

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This document has been prepared in response to a request from the SCDE in advance of the kickoff of a new task force focused on accreditation and accountability. There is information on how a select group of other states implement accreditation and state monitoring, as well as a brief literature review to shed light on possible ways to view the purpose of accreditation, how it might be linked to state monitoring, and best practices in implementing an accreditation policy in South Carolina.

Part I: Summary Table

Alabama	Districts may choose to be accredited through Cognia, formerly AdvanceED. Cognia requires multiple measures be submitted for evaluation and has technical assistance, monitoring and periodic review components built in.	State monitoring is conducted on a five-year, rotating cycle with additional on-site monitoring based on an annual risk-assessment.	Accreditation and federal/state monitoring are completely separate systems and accreditation is available to districts through Cognia, but there is no state oversight or legislation related to accreditation. Monitoring is designed to achieve compliance with federal, state and state board mandates.
Arkansas	The Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) Standards for Accreditation (SFA) monitors accreditation requirements. SFAs are a set of minimum requirements for all public schools. The monitoring tool describes the process and monitoring by the state and is used to identify	The Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) has a system to monitor Federal programs in every Local Education Agency (LEA), including charter schools. ADE’s monitoring review system is based on a review of all Federal and State requirements. Federal and State Categorical programs are also monitored through the	There is a risk assessment that is a part of the “Accreditation of Arkansas Schools and School Districts Monitoring Process and Procedures” document for state and federal law requirements. It is completed annually to identify districts at risk of not being in compliance. An LEA that earns 50 or more points out of a possible 150 on the risk assessment will be

	deficiencies. A tiered monitoring system has been established to inform LEAs of their accreditation status around six systems that support students. Technical assistance is provided to strengthen school program administration and improve the quality of programs and interventions.	application and financial reporting approval processes. Each district receiving funds from any of the Title programs will be monitored at least once every six years with an on-site visit.	considered high risk for onsite monitoring. There are six systems (standards) upon which the risk assessment covers. They are Academic, Student Support Services, District Operation and Fiscal Governance, Human Capital, Stakeholder Communication, Facilities and Equipment. My School Info is a link from the ADE website that allows the public to search and compare public schools and districts from across the State of Arkansas. Data presented on the website is periodically updated and reflective of information submitted by schools and districts to the Arkansas Department of Education. My School Info
Colorado	All schools and districts are accredited using the same single set of indicators and measures. Points are earned per performance indicator and matched to a scoring guide. Performance level frameworks are used to give accreditation ratings. Five categories are used, and schools must complete an annual plan based on accreditation level. State support is differentiated based on the performance of districts and schools. The total points possible are: 15 points for Academic Achievement, 35 for Academic Growth, 15 for Academic Growth Gaps, and 35 for Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness.	The accountability and data analysis unit calculates growth, creates the frameworks used for accreditation (District Performance Frameworks), accredits school districts, assigns school plan types, reports outcome data to the public and assists with data driven decision making. State statutes, regulations and policies can be found here: Statute, Regulations and Policy CDE The district accountability handbook: 2020 District Accountability Handbook The purpose of this handbook is to provide an outline of the requirements and responsibilities for state, district, and school stakeholders in the state's accountability process established by the Education Accountability Act of 2009 (S.B. 09-163).	State and district accountability and accreditation are integrated in the Colorado Department of Education. The Colorado Growth Model measures the academic progress each student has made in a year. The model also tells how a student's progress compares to other students with a similar score history. Colorado uses a consolidated plan for ESSA.
Kansas	The KESA Guidance Document for schools and school systems provides outcomes to be measured and describes the process for school	State and federal monitoring of Title Services and Special Education are integrated in a system called Kansas Integrated Accountability System (KIAS). A three-year	Kansas believes in a process of continuous improvement and purposeful redesign. The accreditation process is a 5-year

	systems. School system responsibility over the course of the five-year period of accreditation is also described in great detail. Four principles of school redesign, sample agendas and school and system improvement plans are shared. Kansas Education Systems Accreditation (KESA)	monitoring cohort list was developed and a title services calendar. Compliance is a part of the accreditation process. Information on compliance can be found here: Compliance	process that is laid out with reporting requirements and monitoring tools. “Compliance” means the state or act of fulfilling official requirements of all statutes and regulations. Compliance is prerequisite to receiving an accreditation rating from the State Board. Private schools can participate in accreditation .”
North Carolina	The process includes analysis of school performance data, school improvement plan, internal assessment, school improvement team meeting minutes. The North Carolina State Board of Education will assess school performance grade, student growth, percentage of graduates passing Math III, ACT overall proficiency, WorkKeys proficiency rate, four-year cohort graduation rate and dropout rate to determine a school’s accreditation designation. Schools may be fully accredited, provisionally accredited or denied accreditation based on the most recent three years of performance data. To earn or maintain accreditation, a school must meet standards, submit all required reports, and pay the review fee. Accreditation Process and Designations	The mission is to ensure that federal and state education funds contribute to students meeting or exceeding rigorous state standards. The primary role of the Division is to provide grants administration, program monitoring, data collection and reporting, and to facilitate the necessary technical assistance to ensure compliance and quality programs. Monitoring is done to ensure compliance, build relationships and provide technical assistance. Federal and state monitoring are combined and executed at the same time on a cycle, with additional monitoring based on risk assessment. There are a number of federal programs that are monitored on a schedule as well as one state program and monitoring is performed by the Federal Program Monitoring and Support Division at the Department of Public Instruction. A list of programs monitored can be found here: Federal Program Monitoring	North Carolina’s accreditation process includes a variety of measures, some that measure growth while others are a set proficiency or achievement standards. The state monitoring emphasizes not only compliance, but also technical assistance and support for schools and districts. These two systems of accreditation and monitoring work completely separately.
Virginia	Virginia Department of Education is in the early phases of developing additional accreditation analytics tools for divisions with a proposed July	The Virginia Department of Education monitors compliance with federal and state requirements and to ensure that program deficiencies are corrected. Federal	Virginia’s accreditation process includes accountability measures, growth measures, as well as continuous improvement of performance levels on selected school

	2020 release. The department revised its Standards of Accreditation in 2015. A new position (Director of Accountability) will provide oversight for state and federal accountability. This comprehensive view of school quality will also focus continuous improvement. There are three accreditation ratings and three performance levels. Elementary and middle schools will be evaluated on proficiency and growth in reading/writing and mathematics achievement and overall proficiency in science. Achievement gaps among student groups in reading/writing and mathematics achievement gaps among student groups and absenteeism. High Schools will be evaluated on: overall proficiency in reading/writing, mathematics, and science. Achievement gaps among student groups in English and mathematics; graduation and completion; dropout rate; absenteeism; college; career and civic readiness; and overall accreditation rating.	policy on the monitoring of formula and discretionary programs is followed. The focus of state monitoring of federal programs is to raise academic performance for all children and to effect greater accountability for public education. All Title programs that are monitored and the schedule for monitoring can be found here: VDOE :: Federal Program Monitoring for ESEA	quality indicators such as academic achievement and gaps in subgroups, graduation and dropout rates and attendance. The State Board of Education reviews all relevant indicators for all schools each year to assign accreditation status to each school. Accreditation and State monitoring are conducted separately, but there is significant overlap in the standards that are assessed. For example, federal accountability indicators include academic indicators measured by pass rates on the standards of learning, growth in reading and math, high school graduation rates, and the progress of English Learners. School quality indicators that overlap include overall proficiency and growth in reading and math, high school graduation and growth of English Learners. Accreditation and Federal Reports, School Accreditation Ratings VDOE :: Standards of Accreditation

Part II: State One-Pagers

These states were selected by the client, and SERVE Center staff, in an effort to learn more about how different states approach accreditation and monitoring, and what implementation options may already exist for the SCDE to review in creating and refining its own system. SERVE Center staff sent a brief survey to stakeholders in seven other states: Alabama; Arkansas; Colorado; Kansas; Kentucky; North Carolina; and Virginia. The survey questions were designed to gain information on each state's accreditation and compliance monitoring regulations and legislation. Survey questions also focused on accreditation and compliance monitoring systems, overlap between systems, and the states' views on the purpose of accreditation and potential research and evidence underlying current systems. The survey questions can be found in Appendix A.

Alabama Accreditation and Monitoring

Information provided by Kristen Dial, kristen.dial@alsde.edu

Alabama does not have any state laws requiring accreditation or addressing compliance monitoring. LEAs may choose to be accredited by Cognia, formerly AdvanceED.

In terms of state and federal monitoring, the ALSDE believes that “The objective of the Compliance Monitoring program is to adequately monitor all K-12 school systems in Alabama for compliance with state and federal regulations and State Board of Education mandates.” The ALSDE follows a five-year monitoring schedule with consolidated state and federal laws and regulations being monitored at the same time. In addition to the five-year rotating monitoring schedule, a risk assessment is also conducted annually to determine if LEAs are in need of additional compliance monitoring. LEAs that have monitoring findings from an on-site monitoring or desk review have 60 days to develop and implement a Corrective Action Plan addressing any deficiencies. If, at the end of the 60 days, citations still exist, federal and state funds may be withheld until compliance is attained. In addition, the LEA will be subjected to on-site monitoring the subsequent year. Technical assistance will be provided to assist the LEA with addressing the deficiencies. Monitoring and technical assistance are provided out of the Office of Supporting Programs, Department of Compliance Monitoring.

More information: [Compliance Monitoring](#)

Accreditation and compliance monitoring are completely separate systems and ALSDE staff is not aware of any evidence or research base behind the current accreditation system beyond what Cognia has developed and used to create the services they offer to states and districts. The staff did not provide information on what they see as the purpose of K-12 accreditation.

Arkansas

Accreditation and Monitoring

Information provided by Elbert Harvey, eharvey@adi.org

Accreditation:

Arkansas State Statute A.C.A. 6-15-202 established the State Accreditation process for Arkansas. Schools are accredited through the State Department of Education in the Division of Public School Accountability. State and federal monitoring are consolidated with accreditation monitoring but can be done separately depending on the risk assessment. The link to the list of current state statutes that superintendents must assure annual compliance can be found below. Compliance with state statutes and department requirements are a condition of accreditation and the link to Rules Governing Standards for Accreditation states whether schools or school districts will be cited or placed in probationary status for failure to meet the Standards for Accreditation. It also describes the enforcement actions that may be applied to Arkansas public schools and public school districts that fail to meet the Standards for Accreditation. Penalties range from warning to closing the school, state takeover, or district consolidation/annexation in part or whole. The link to the regulatory authority can be found [here](#). Standards for Accreditation must be reviewed every two years to ensure alignment with the laws of the State of Arkansas and the rules of the Department of Education.

Monitoring:

The Division of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) is required to conduct compliance reviews to ensure that LEAs meet the Standards for Accreditation. DESE is required to monitor implementation of state code, rules and regulations. The following tiered monitoring system has been established to inform LEAs of their accreditation status: Tier 1 - Desk Monitoring; Tier 2 - Request Additional Information; Tier 3 - Deeper Dive into Data or Evidence; Tier 4 – Onsite Monitoring. LEAs can be selected for onsite monitoring based on (1) a request from the Superintendent or Commissioner of the Elementary and Secondary Education, (2) the risk assessment score meets the high risk threshold, (3) a sampling of LEAs or an established cycle, or (4) the tiered monitoring system. See: [Programmatic and Financial Monitoring Guide For Arkansas Federal Programs](#).

In addition, Arkansas' Act 807 of 2007 mandated that the monitoring process be expanded by the ADE to include a periodic monitoring review of the LEA's and school's implementation of programs supported by State Categorical funds. The [Financial and Programmatic Monitoring of ESEA](#) /Act 807 is conducted via on-site visits to Arkansas school districts. These LEAs may be monitored outside of the scheduled cycle if a district has serious or chronic compliance problems, has unresolved issues identified from a previous on-site monitoring, or at the discretion of the Commissioner of Education. The Monitoring Guide is presented as a checklist that can be used by LEAs to ensure programs are operating in compliance with the law and guidance. Compliance indicator items were selected from among Federal entitlements and State categorical program requirements to ensure that the review covers all major aspects of the law and the monitoring focuses — to the extent feasible — on matters most related to the educational purposes of ESEA. In general, Arkansas believes that the purpose of K-12 Accreditation is compliance, and the state accreditation system is not based on any particular evidence or research. Federal monitoring is not directly included in the state accreditation process.

Colorado

Accreditation and Monitoring

Information provided by Jess Anderson, janderson@serve.org

Accreditation:

The Colorado Department of Education (CDE) issues district and school level Performance Framework Reports. Districts are designated an accreditation category based on their framework score. The framework score is a percentage of the total points earned out of the total points eligible in each performance indicator. The score is then matched to a scoring guide to determine the accreditation category. The five categories are Accredited with Distinction, Accredited, Accredited with Improvement Plan, Accredited with Priority Improvement Plan, and Accredited with Turnaround Plan. Schools must complete a plan regardless of accreditation category. The four (4) plan types are Performance Plan, Improvement Plan, Priority Improvement Plan, and Turnaround Plan.

The District and School Performance Frameworks ([overview](#)) — holds districts and schools accountable for performance on the same, single set of indicators and measures; and provides for a differentiated approach to state support. The performance frameworks measure attainment on academic achievement, academic longitudinal growth, academic gaps and postsecondary and workforce readiness. Districts can submit a request to consider district accreditation ratings or school plan type based on guidance found [here](#).

Monitoring:

[State Accountability System](#)

Colorado's education accountability system recognizes successful schools and districts which in turn serve as models, while struggling schools and districts receive support. The Accountability and Data Analysis (ADA) Unit at CDE calculates growth on CMAS, PSAT and English language proficiency, creates the School and District Performance Frameworks, accredits school districts and assigns school plan type assignments, reports student outcome data to the public and educators and assists districts and CDE staff in using student performance data to drive decision making. The state accountability data tools and reports [page](#) provide useful information for schools and districts.

Of note:

Colorado uses a consolidated application for ESSA Funds. The [Manual](#) and ESSA Improvement Plan [Rubric](#) are in the links. CDE conducts monitoring through [tier I reviews](#), [tier II reviews](#) and [tier III reviews](#).

Kansas Accreditation and Monitoring

Information provided by Tate Toedman, ttoedman@ksde.org & Jeannette Nobo, jnobo@ksde.org

Accreditation:

Kansas has a new accreditation system and the new regulations for that system are currently going through the regulatory process. The accreditation of schools in Kansas is part of a process where schools meet a defined set of standards based on a school accreditation model called [Kansas Education Systems Accreditation \(KESA\)](#). The three Accreditation Rating Levels are Accredited, Accredited - Conditional, and Not Accredited. The KESA [Accreditation Criteria](#) was developed for the Accreditation Review Council (ARC) to make accreditation recommendations to the State Board of Education. It consists of eight (8) sections and each section corresponds to a question in the ARC's executive summary of the report to the State Board of Education. The document is provided so that systems and teams can have a clear understanding about the measures used to make accreditation recommendations. Accreditation in Kansas is a five-year process. The [Kansas Education Systems Accreditation Guidance 2019-2020](#) spells out the five-year process for accreditation for schools. The [5 r's Framework for Accreditation](#) document provides a sample with a 24 month activity schedule with a [visual overview](#). A proposed rubric of the indicators from the 5 r's Framework can be found here: [Relationships](#); [Relevance](#); [Responsive Culture](#) and [Rigor](#).

The Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE) believes in purposeful redesign and a process of continuous improvement at both the district and school levels. This vision encourages school systems to leverage systemic improvement by identifying causes of academic and nonacademic challenges. The KSDE generally believes that the purposes of accreditation include compliance, outcomes, opportunities and growth.

Compliance:

A [compliance issues](#) presentation discusses the overarching definition of compliance in Kansas. Monitoring is a part of compliance and will be addressed below, however, to achieve a rating of "accredited," systems must be in good standing with KSDE regarding all applicable state and federal statutory/regulatory requirements. Compliance is all about statutes and regulations and is prerequisite to receiving an accreditation rating from the State Board.

Monitoring:

The [Kansas Integrated Accountability System \(KIAS\)](#) used by the Special Education, and Title Services (SETS) Team monitors federal and state programs utilizing the KIAS cycle of continuous data collection, reporting, verification, and improvement. SETS monitors to ensure both state- and district-level compliance with federal and state program requirements. A sample 3 year monitoring cohort list and the KIAS special education and title services calendar can be found in the links above. Accreditation is completely separate from compliance monitoring, however some of the federal requirements are part of the accreditation compliance.

North Carolina Accreditation and Monitoring

Information provided by Donna Brown, dbrown@serve.org and Tina Letchworth, tina.letchworth@dpi.nc.gov

North Carolina General Statute §115C-12(39) directs the SBE to adopt rigorous academic standards for accreditation after considering regional and national accreditation standards, curriculum standards, and other information it deems appropriate. North Carolina State Board of Education Policy ACCR-000 describes the High School Accreditation Framework as the process whereby public schools undergo a quality assurance process that includes outside review of school performance indicators.

Further Reading: [G.S. 115C-12 Accreditation and Designations](#)

No state laws have been established to date for monitoring accreditation. Local school districts in North Carolina can choose between the state agency and regional/national accrediting agencies for accreditation. Federal monitoring is consolidated with state monitoring and is completed on a four-year cycle based upon risk factors identified in a formula-based risk assessment of the 300-plus public school units. Based on the risk assessment, monitoring may be completed more than once in a given cycle (i.e., schedule).

Compliance monitoring and accreditation of schools/districts are unrelated and completely separate. With the exception of laws under IDEA, there are few directives in state law that require monitoring. Monitoring of federal programs is authorized under ESSA is conducted by the Federal Program Monitoring and Support Division at NCDPI. In general, North Carolina believes the purpose of K-12 accreditation to be both outcomes and opportunities. North Carolina's accreditation system is modeled on the Cognia program and Cognia performs the vast majority of accreditation requests in the state. Cognia's evidence and research is internal to the company, but some information can be found here: <https://www.cognia.org/services/accreditation-certification/#accreditation>

Virginia Accreditation and Monitoring

Information provided by Patricia Popp, pxpopp@wm.edu

Virginia's Standards of Accreditation can be found at [Virginia Administrative Code - Title 8. Education - Agency 20. State Board of Education - Chapter 131. Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia](#). Additional implementation documents are available at [VDOE :: Standards of Accreditation](#).

Schools are accredited by the State Agency. Monitoring of state laws and regulations is done separately from federal programs and monitoring is done on a schedule, while a schedule and risk factors are used for certain programs like McKinney Vento.

Compliance monitoring of federal programs and accreditation of schools/districts are completely separate processes and in general, Virginia sees the purpose of K-12 accreditation to be compliance, outcomes, opportunities, growth and quality. Although federal accountability indicators and school quality indicators overlap as measured by pass rates on the standards of learning, growth in reading and math, high school graduation rates, and the progress of English Learners.

Federal monitoring occurs on a schedule that is provided to districts annually. The link to the updated monitoring cycle for 2020-2021 can be found here: [MEMO 328-20, Attachment A: 2020-2021 Federal Program Monitoring Schedule](#) (Word). The federal monitoring cycle through school year 2022-2023 can be found here: [MEMO 328-20, Attachment B: Federal Program Monitoring Schedule 2020-2021 through 2022-2023](#) (Word). The goal of [federal monitoring](#) is to raise the academic performance for all children and to effect greater accountability for public education.

Accreditation standards ([Standards of Accreditation](#)) were designed and recently revised (2015) to provide a more comprehensive view of school quality while encouraging continuous improvement for all schools and placing increased emphasis on closing achievement gaps. School quality indicators include overall achievement status of students in reading, writing, science and math but includes elements of growth in each subject. Achievement gaps among student groups, dropout rate, absenteeism and college, career and civic readiness are included as additional indicators. There are three performance levels — Level One: Meets or exceeds standard or sufficient improvement; Level Two: Near standard or making sufficient improvement; Level Three: Below standard. In order to be eligible for accreditation, schools must monitor performance and update school improvement plans as needed when all quality indicators are at level 1. Schools that are at level 2 must revise multi-year improvement plan and implement revisions to improve performance on indicators. Schools at level 3 must implement state-approved corrective action plan following academic review conducted by Virginia Department of Education. Performance levels: Accredited-all quality indicators at Level 1 or Level 2; Accredited with conditions-one or more school quality indicators at Level 3; Accreditation denied-schools that fail to fully adopt or implement corrective actions to address Level 3 school quality indicators.

Part III: Research and Resources

This brief literature review has been divided up into four sections according to the following guiding questions:

1. What impact has accreditation shown to have on student achievement?
2. Are there any historical artifacts (e.g., ED policy, guidance documents, best practices)?
3. Should accreditation be focused more on compliance? Outcomes? Opportunities? Growth? Something else, or some combination of those?
4. What is the purpose of accreditation?

1. *What impact has accreditation shown to have on student achievement?*

Eshleman, Tami Sue, (2016). **Comparison of Nebraska Accreditation Options and Effect on Student Achievement: A Mixed Methods Study.** *Educational Administration: Theses, Dissertations, and Student Research*, 273. (Retrieved from: <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1280&context=cehsedaddiss>)

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to determine if and how each of the two accreditation options in Nebraska may influence student achievement outcomes. A mixed-methods study was developed. Phase I quantitative analysis determined whether a significant difference existed in the ACT composite scores and the NeSA reading and math assessments in schools accredited by either the Nebraska Frameworks or AdvancED. The analysis revealed that NeSA math was influenced by accreditation choice. Based on the quantitative results, school superintendents were identified for Phase II qualitative methods to survey and interview to share (a) attributes that contributed to their academic success, (b) how accreditation influences best teaching practices, and (c) what challenges affect student achievement.

Respondents did not attribute their success to the accreditation process. The districts' successes were based on processes that were developed by the district leaders. Personnel contributed to the success according to the respondents. Policymakers should focus on reducing the requirements for accountability and accreditation that would allow districts to focus on improving student achievement.

2. *Are there any historical artifacts (e.g., ED policy, guidance documents, best practices)?*

Wixom, Micah Ann (June 2014). **"States Moving from Accreditation to Accountability."** Accreditation: State School Accreditation Policies. Denver, CO: Education Commission of the States. (Retrieved from: <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED560997>)

Abstract

Accreditation policies vary widely among the states. Since Education Commission of the States last reviewed public school accreditation policies in 1998, a number of states have seen their legislatures take a stronger role in accountability--resulting in a move from state-administered accreditation systems to outcomes-focused state accountability programs. Even in states maintaining accreditation programs, accreditation is often a component of the larger accountability system that evaluates school, district, and state educational performance on a number of indicators. This document provides details regarding the public school accreditation of the 50 states. Key differences between accountability and accreditation are shared as well.

The Virginia Board of Education is revising its accreditation standards to provide a more comprehensive view of school quality while encouraging continuous improvement for all schools and placing increased emphasis on closing achievement gaps. School accreditation ratings for the 2018-2019 school year will be the first to reflect this new approach to accountability. <https://www.doe.virginia.gov/boe/accreditation/2017-school-accred.shtml>

Standards of Accreditation: <https://www.doe.virginia.gov/boe/accreditation/index.shtml>

Martin, C., Sargrad, S., and Batel, S., (May 19, 2016). **Making the Grade: A 50-State Analysis of School Accountability Systems**. Washington, DC: Center for American Progress. (Available at <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/education/reports/2016/05/19/137444/making-the-grade/>)

Abstract

State accountability systems vary in complexity, and while the majority of states have surpassed the requirements of No Child Left Behind, nearly all states will need to make adjustments to comply fully with the Every Student Succeeds Act. The authors find that statewide accountability measures fall into one of seven main categories of indicators: achievement indicators, such as proficiency in reading and mathematics; student growth indicators in multiple academic subjects; English language acquisition indicators; early warning indicators, such as chronic absenteeism; persistence indicators, such as graduation rates; college- and career-ready indicators, such as participation in and performance on college entry exams; and other indicators, such as access to the arts. It is apparent from the research for this report that state accountability systems vary in complexity. It is also abundantly clear that while the majority of states have surpassed the requirements of NCLB, nearly all states will need to make adjustments to comply fully with the new law. As states plan for this transition, CAP recommends that they take the following steps: over the next year, states should take advantage of the opportunity to improve their current accountability systems with a set of indicators that better captures student achievement and school success.

3. *Should accreditation be focused more on compliance? Outcomes? Opportunities? Growth? Something else, or some combination of those?*

Enomoto, E. K., & Conley, S. (2015). **School Accreditation Process as Routinized Action: Retaining Stability While Promoting Reform**. *Journal of School Leadership*, 25(1), 133–156. (Retrieved from: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/105268461502500106>)

Abstract

In this qualitative study, we explored how accreditation processes as routinized action can retain stability while promoting school reform efforts. We identified three secondary schools (two high schools, one middle) that had each employed accreditation processes as required in their respective school districts. We conducted interviews with key informants at each school, reviewed documents prepared for accreditation, and analyzed the findings based on routinized action theory. Using Feldman's (2000) typology of change (repair, expand, strive to make change), we posited how school renewal takes place in an ongoing and systematic manner. The findings suggest that the routines provided in accreditation processes can offer more than just stabilizing elements in a school organization, which had been the traditional view of organizational theorists. We offer implications for researchers and school leaders to consider in applying routines while seeking reform.

Enomoto, E.K., & Conley, S. (2014). **Accreditation Routines in a Demoralized School: Repairing, Expanding, and Striving for Improvement.** *Journal of Educational Leadership and Management*, 2(1), 74-96 doi: 10.4471/ijelm.2014.09. (Retrieved from: <https://www.hipatiapress.com/hpjournals/index.php/ijelm/article/viewFile/778/784>)

Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to explore how accreditation processes aided a school principal in making reform happen. Using routinized action theory (Feldman, 2000), we examined how the routines in school accreditation were used to transform what had been a demoralized, low performing middle school. This theoretical lens is important as it demonstrates that routinized actions can offer more than stabilizing elements in a school organization but also help administrators seeking to make change. We begin by describing the setting of Ironwood Middle School, presenting the research inquiry methods, and examining how accreditation processes enabled the school to move forward in the face of uncertainty and instability.

Ulmer, Phillip Gregory, (2015). **Accreditation Outcome Scores: Teacher Attitudes toward the Accreditation Process and Professional Development.** *Educational Administration: Theses, Dissertations, and Student Research.*
(Retrieved from: <https://search.proquest.com/openview/9118336399cac113f923602fd3bd7b20/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=18750&diss=y>)

Abstract

Accreditation is an essential component in the history of education in the United States and is a central catalyst for quality education, continuous improvement, and positive growth in student achievement. Although previous researchers identified teachers as an essential component in meeting accreditation outcomes, additional information was needed about teacher attitudes toward the accreditation process and professional development in relationship to actual accreditation outcomes. The purpose of this quantitative causal-comparative study was to investigate how teacher attitudes toward the school accreditation process and professional development, or an interaction between the two variables, effected their schools' accreditation outcome scores. Participants included 61 teachers from four schools accredited by AdvancED. Data was

collected using the Questionnaire on the School Accreditation Process to determine teacher attitudes toward the accreditation process (positive or negative) and the Teachers' Attitudes about Professional Development instrument to determine teacher attitudes of professional development (positive or negative). The findings indicated that accreditation outcome scores were significantly higher in teachers with positive attitudes toward the accreditation process than teachers with negative attitudes toward the accreditation process. Recommendations for practice included: stakeholders continuing to provide resources for teachers to successfully implement accreditation processes; educational leaders identifying, implementing, and embracing accreditation processes that enable teachers to focus on continuous improvement and student achievement; and robust professional-development programs to help teachers be successful and grow as professionals. Recommendations for future research were also offered.

4. *What is the purpose of accreditation?*

Jimenez, L. and Sargard, S., (March 2, 2017). **A New Vision for School Accountability**. Washington, DC: Center for American Progress.

(Available at: <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/education-k-12/reports/2017/03/03/427156/a-new-vision-for-school-accountability/>)

Abstract

This report presents a framework for school accountability systems that achieve college and career readiness for all students. This report describes a comprehensive approach to school accountability that encompasses each of these categories and goes beyond ESSA's vision to help states, districts, and schools understand what led to their results. The report reviews the ESSA accountability requirements; describes a broader vision for student and school success; details a system for process management that fosters systems-level accountability to help states understand how well they are progressing toward that broader vision; and provides considerations that states should keep in mind when building accountability systems. The report's school accountability approach emphasizes two equally important goals for these new systems: 1) ensuring that accountability systems drive toward equal education opportunities by creating a system for identifying and acting on chronic low performance by particular groups of students and 2) ensuring that accountability systems are broadly framed in order to drive toward a comprehensive conception of student and school success and a culture of continuous improvement rather than just shame and punishment.

Wilkerson, J.R. (2019), **Rubrics meeting quality assurance and improvement needs in the accreditation context**. *Quality Assurance in Education*, 28(1), pp. 19-32.

(Retrieved from: <https://doi.org/10.1108/QAE-04-2019-0045>)

Abstract

K-20 accreditation is contingent on having policies and procedures that provide evidence of quality assurance (QA) and quality improvement (QI), viewed here as the first of two conflicting paradigms, requiring concurrent expressions of excellence and need. Standardized summative assessments using the traditional tabular rubric design (typically writing assessments) serve the QA purpose well while leaving QI difficult to achieve. This is the second-related pair of conflicting paradigms – formative vs summative

assessment. The purpose of this study is to illuminate these conflicts, present a sample illustrative solution and suggest that both institutions and accreditation agencies implement policies resolving these conflicts.

Oldham, J. (2018). **K-12 ACCREDITATION'S NEXT MOVE: A storied guarantee looks to accountability 2.0.** *Education Next*, 18(1), 24+.

(Retrieved from: <https://go.gale.com/ps/anonymous?id=GALE%7CA520581889&sid=googleScholar&v=2.1&it=r&linkaccess=abs&issn=15399664&p=AONE&sw=w>)

Abstract

The Current Generation of American public-school students has grown up in the era of centralized, standardized data. Anyone curious about how local schools were doing could look at pass rates on annual exams in math and reading, the foundation of federally mandated, test-based accountability. New rules are poised to change this system. The federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), written to shrink the federal government's reach, enables states to embrace a more holistic approach to quality control. Test scores are still important, but so are attendance, school climate, graduation rates, and other non-academic measures. As states redesign their accountability systems, the challenge is how to best measure, report, and utilize this information to improve student learning. One industry is offering itself up for the job: accreditation. For more than a century, schools have hired nonprofit accreditors to determine whether their operations and outcomes meet external quality standards, thereby earning an accreditation seal of approval. While accreditation is better known at institutions of higher education, where it is required for schools to participate in federal student-aid programs, it is also practiced, though little-understood, at K-12 public, public charter, and private schools. This article looks at defining accreditation and how it fits into the nation's K-12 schools.

Bernasconi, A. (2004). **Current trends in the accreditation of K–12 schools: Cases in the United States, Australia and Canada.** *Journal of Education*, 185(3), 73–82.

(Retrieved from: <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ774576>)

Abstract

Systems to periodically evaluate the performance of K-12 schools are, broadly speaking, of two kinds: "inspection," the paradigm of England's OFSTED (Office for Standards in Education); and "accreditation," originally developed nearly a century ago by what are now the U.S. regional accreditation agencies. In the past decade some important changes have been taking place in the accreditation model for K-12 schools in the United States, while at the same time countries such as Australia and Canada, heirs to the British inspection tradition, have begun to experiment with U.S.-like accreditation. In this article, the author describes some of the new developments in the U.S. regional and state accreditation processes. He examines a new model of school evaluation in Victoria, Australia, and a quite original example of accreditation, one that could perhaps be called a "post-accreditation" prototype, in the Canadian province of British Columbia. The final section presents a summary of the trends that emerge from these cases.

Conley, S. , & Enomoto, E. K. (2005). **Routines in school organizations: Creating stability and change.** *Journal of Educational Administration*, 43(1), 9–21.

(Retrieved from: <https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/09578230510577263/full/html>)

Abstract

This paper presents routinized action theory as a way to examine the regular, habitual activities that occur in school organizations. Using this theoretical lens, school routines were analyzed in order to understand organizational stability and change. Design/methodology/approach: Using case study methods, three discrete cases are presented, a K-12 public school setting, a private international school, and a central office in an educational system. Cases were selected for their descriptive detail and illustrate different aspects of the theory. Findings: Routinized action theory posits that alterations in routines occur for different reasons: failure to produce desired outcome producing new possibilities, and/or falling short of ideal targets. In these case studies, routines were altered by management to address problems, repair what did not work, and strive toward new targets. Management also shifted resources accordingly. While these actions can help the organization survive environmental changes, routines may also restrict the organization's response to change. Practical implications: By analyzing the resources associated with routines, school administrators can understand the possibilities for accomplishing necessary work in ways that reduce environmental influences. Routines might be a useful lever for change. Originality/value: Routinized action theory may have been overlooked as a viable means to analyze educational organizations. The systematic application of this theoretical lens to schools holds significant implications for practitioners and researchers because schools are deeply routinized organizations.

Appendix A

Survey questions sent to other states
Accreditation and Monitoring Survey

Q1 First and Last Name:

- Q2 State Name:
- ☐ Alabama (1)
 - ☐ Arkansas (2)
 - ☐ Colorado (3)
 - ☐ Kansas (4)
 - ☐ Kentucky (5)
 - ☐ North Carolina (6)
 - ☐ Virginia (7)

Q3 What are the state's laws/regulations requiring or encouraging accreditation for public schools? Please provide link(s) for further reading, if available.

Q4 What are the state's laws/regulations that address compliance monitoring (of state laws and regulations)? Please provide link(s) for further reading, if available.

- Q5 Are schools accredited by the state agency, regional/national accrediting agencies, or a choice between the two? Please use the text box as you deem necessary to explain your answer or give additional details.
- ☐ State Agency (1) _____
 - ☐ Regional/National Accrediting Agencies (2) _____
 - ☐ Choice between the two (3) _____

- Q14 Is monitoring of state laws/regulations done separately from the monitoring of federal programs (e.g., Title I, Part A) or are state and federal both a part of a consolidated monitoring system? Please use the text box as you deem necessary to explain your answer or give additional details.
- ☐ Separately (1) _____
 - ☐ Consolidated (2) _____

Q15 Does every school/district get monitored on a schedule (e.g., once every five years), or is the decision of which schools/districts get monitored each year based on risk factors? Please use the text box as you deem necessary to explain your answer or give additional details.

- ☐ Monitoring is done on a schedule (1) _____
- ☐ Monitoring is done based on risk factors (2) _____

Q13 Is Accreditation related or connected to compliance monitoring in any way, or are these two systems/functions completely separate?

- ☐ These two system/functions are connected (1)
- ☐ These two systems/functions are completely separate (2)

If you answered that the systems/functions are connected, please answer Q7; if not, please skip to Q8

Q7 How is compliance monitoring related to the accreditation of schools/districts?

Q8 In terms of state monitoring (i.e., state laws, state regulations), what is the penalty for noncompliance? (For example, in some states, each "finding" lowers the school/district's accreditation rating or overall risk rating).

Q16 What does your state believe the purpose of K-12 accreditation to be (please select all that apply)?

- ☐ Compliance (1)
- ☐ Outcomes (2)
- ☐ Opportunities (3)
- ☐ Growth (4)
- ☐ I don't know (5)
- ☐ Other (6) _____

Q17 Is your state's accreditation system/program based on evidence or research? If so, please provide sources/links if possible.

- ☐ Yes (1) _____
- ☐ No (2)
- ☐ I don't know (3)

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