



Standard and Criteria
For
Accreditation of Schools
Approved for Postsecondary
Education

North Central Association
Commission on Accreditation and
School Improvement

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Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement

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NCA STANDARD

Each member school shall maximize the proportion of its promoted or graduated students who are self-directed learners and are prepared to make successful transitions from school-to-school or school-to-work.

MEMBERSHIP CRITERIA

The following criteria identify conditions that must be present to meet the NCA Standard. The membership criteria are required for initial and continued membership. The five major criteria are:

School (Institutional) Improvement Plan (SIP)
Information Systems (IS)
Process of Schooling (PS)
Vision, Leadership-Governance, and School Community (VL)
Resources and Allocation (RA)

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The school is committed to developing and implementing an improvement plan that emphasizes student learning and achievement. The school community accepts that school improvement must be pursued continually and aggressively.

- SIP 1 Each school conducts a continuous improvement process that focuses on enhanced learning for all students. At all times the school is engaged actively in some phase of the school improvement process (planning, internal analysis, external review, implementation, and documentation).
- SIP 2 The school has a standing committee that is responsible for initiating, planning, and coordinating the school's improvement efforts.
- SIP 3 The current school improvement initiative:
- Involves relevant groups in the community.
 - Addresses industry needs in the service areas served.
 - Begins with the development of a school profile drawn from the school's information system (see information system criteria).
 - Identifies a challenging set of goals that focus on learning and achievement for all students.
 - Develops an improvement plan that details the changes that will be made in the process of education such that improvement can be documented in those goals.
 - Provides a specific assessment system designed to document student success on the goals identified.

- SIP 4 All schools host an accreditation team visit at least once every five years. The Board of Trustees monitors such review. Each school submits the appropriate documentation for accreditation. The school is prepared for an unannounced one-day visit at any time.
- SIP 5 The school is able to document, in a variety of ways that student performance goals are met.

INFORMATION SYSTEMS

Each school is expected to have in place an assessment-driven information system that is comprehensive and current. This system is designed to address questions relative to student performance and the school's effectiveness, as well as questions that ask for a comparison of its own students and other students. The school continually collects student and community data to analyze the performance of its students as they enter, progress, and exit.

- IS 1 The school has established a data-driven information system that is used in its instructional decision-making process.
- IS 2 Information is regularly collected from community members relative to their attitudes, expectations, and assessments of the quality of the school, its program, the climate, and the success of its students.
- IS 3 Information gathered from the community and student performance information are used to design quality programs, to establish a positive learning climate, and to continually evaluate and improve all school conditions.
- IS 4 The information system provides appropriate data for personnel to analyze. For example:
- The extent to which promoted or graduated students are prepared to be successful at the next level of education, in the world of work, and in becoming self-directed learners.
- IS 5 Each school systematically analyzes its student performance data and uses the results of this analysis as the basis for the school profile and to document program effectiveness.
- IS 6 Follow-up studies of students promoted or graduated from the school are conducted to determine the degree to which students have made successful transitions to the next level and to obtain their assessment of their preparation.
- IS 7 The school continually collects and analyzes information on students who have dropped out of the educational program. The school community uses this information to develop appropriate interventions to help students re-enter the regular educational program or seek alternative forms of education.

- IS 8 A member school maintains a verifiable assessment-driven system of information collection that will afford evidence as to the effectiveness of the school in meeting its mission and its goals over time. The following kinds of information, among others, are regarded as useful in program planning and are requisites of a continuous evaluation system.
- Student Characteristics:* A member school collects data on the relevant economic, educational, mental, physical, and social characteristics of the students served by the school.
- Admission Practices:* A member school collects data indicating the degree to which its admission practices are in accord with the admission policies of the school.
- Achievement:* An analysis is made to determine the extent to which the school's instructional objectives are being achieved over time. The assessment of achievement includes student grades and GPA, retention rates, job placement rates, program and course completion rates, scores on admissions tests or other standardized tests, percentage of graduates pursuing degrees, acceptance of graduates to professional schools, state licensing and other examination pass rates, follow-up studies of graduates, and student loan default rates.
- Student Attitudes:* Systematic inquiry is made into the perceptions held by students concerning the adequacy of their school experiences and the program.
- Faculty Attitudes:* Systematic inquiry is made into the perceptions held by the teachers regarding those factors in the school that reduce or enhance their teaching effectiveness and that of the educational program.
- Labor Markets to Be Served:* An analysis is made of current and emergent employment needs, as the basis for those program modifications in the school that will provide the trained personnel to meet changing labor market requirements.
- Individual Program Cost Effectiveness:* An analysis is made of the per student costs of each individual program. This cost when correlated with data concerning student performance is used to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the curriculum.
- Surveys of On-the-Job Supervisors:* If on-the-job training is provided, member schools conduct systematic surveys to evaluate the adequacy of the initial training the students have received.
- Compliance with Federal Title IV Regulations.* Analysis must be made of the results of financial or compliance audits, program reviews, and other information relevant to meeting the school's responsibilities under Title IV. A plan to correct areas of noncompliance must be developed.
- Evaluation of All Program Aspects:* Member schools conduct a systematic regular evaluation of all program aspects including course content and instructional methods. Faculty members are included in this periodic evaluation.
- IS 9 Systematic assessments of changing economic and societal conditions, the characteristics of the student body, and program objectives and operations are conducted. These assessments should take into account such factors as schedules, counseling and library services, and teaching strategies and materials and should be organized in a manner to encourage modifications needed to adapt the program to its changing environment.
- IS 10 The school conducts, on a regular basis, an inventory of the career needs and interests of its potential students.

- IS 12 A periodic determination is made of the specific course requirements needed by the students enrolled in the school for the completion of their educational program inclusive of appropriate developmental and remedial courses directed towards "ability to benefit" students.
- IS 13 The administrative head is provided with the authority necessary to stimulate the continuous assessment of changing societal conditions and student characteristics and to provide leadership in accomplishing the adaptation of the program in the light of such assessment.
- IS 14 The School's program completion rate, licensing pass rate, and job placement rate for program completers meet the established NCA CASI acceptable rates. The acceptable rate in each area shall be reviewed and revised annually to reflect the percentage rate equal to one standard deviation below the average rate calculated from the data for the most recent reporting year.

Rates for the 2006 year are:

- a. Program Completion Rate: At least 66% of enrolled students complete their program within 150% of the time designated for completing the program.
- b. Licensing Pass Rate: At least 49% of students within two years of completing their program.
- c. Program Completer Placement Rate: At least 66% within two years of completion of the program.

PROCESS OF SCHOOLING

The school is responsible for developing educational programs that reflect the characteristics of the community and that increase the intellectual, personal, physical, social, and career development of the students it serves. Through the teaching-learning program all students are expected to engage in rigorous and ever more challenging educational pursuits at all levels. Overall the school program is designed to "be ready" to accommodate students of varying levels of development, prepare students to be productive citizens in a democratic society, and enable students to become self-directed learners.

Student Learning Goals

As a result of analyzing information on students and the community, the school establishes learning goals to give direction to the overall program. Learning goals are designed to press all students to excellence and focus on enhancing the intellectual, personal, physical, social, and career development of students.

- PS 1 The learning goals are challenging, are appropriate in terms of rigor and diversity, meet student needs, and are consistent with the stated goals of the program.

- PS 2 Objectives are:
- identified for the specific subject areas and the various programs such as the activity program, and student personnel services;
 - expressed in terms of the specific behaviors, skills, and attitudes to be sought in each program area of the school;
 - consistent and coherent with the major purposes of the school and with the state plan for career-technical education;
 - consistent with industry standards where appropriate.
- PS 3 Where appropriate, the school's objectives should be stated in measurable behavioral and performance terms that will lend themselves to specific determination of the degree to which they are being realized in the school.

Curriculum

The curriculum reflects the needs and interests of the students and community. The curriculum is designed to increase the intellectual, personal, physical, social, and career development of the student population and engage students in rigorous and challenging educational pursuits commensurate with their level of development. The curriculum provides a balanced program for all students and is flexible enough to permit wide variation in student development.

- PS 5 Each school provides, as a minimum, those course offerings needed to facilitate completion of skill certificate and/or specific career-technical certification requirements.
- The course schedule ensures that all courses and prerequisites are available when indicated.
 - The school follows the course schedule.
- PS 6 It is the responsibility of the school to plan its curriculum patterns to serve its students and community.
- PS 7 The school has published completion requirements that specify the total number of units, specific courses, and competencies to be achieved. Where state statute or regulations allow the school discretion in designating required courses, the school gives appropriate consideration to the diverse needs of the students served.
- PS 9 Quality programs are accessible for all students.
- PS 10 The curriculum utilizes the resources of the community.
- PS 11 The curriculum provides for equity of opportunity and diversity in learning activities to enable the school to meet student performance improvement goals.
- PS 12 The curriculum is developed, evaluated, and regularly revised by the professional staff with appropriate involvement by the school community. Student achievement data are used to improve instruction and modify curriculum.

- PS 13 Procedures that foster vertical and horizontal program articulation within the school and with affiliated schools are in place and operative.
- PS 14 The school is so organized as to foster experimentation and innovation designed to adapt the school to the changing needs of its community. Through a process of continuous assessment and innovation the school seeks to improve its capacity for serving education needs efficiently and effectively. The following areas are examples of programs that might be helpful in serving the educational needs of a community.
Occupational Exploration: Programs designed to familiarize students with various occupations, the special skills required for them, and the training requisites. These programs are directed towards assisting the student to make a meaningful career choice.
Skill Development (Technical and Career Preparatory): Programs designed to prepare students for advanced or more highly skilled postsecondary technical education or training.
Skill Development (Job Proficiency Training): Programs designed to prepare students to enter employment upon completion of the courses.
- PS 15 Schools may offer noncredit remedial work as necessary to permit successful progress by students. All such noncredit offerings are worthwhile educational experiences in a manner appropriate to the particular requirements of students.
- The courses offered are based on an analysis of the needs and interests of the student in the community.
 - The course offerings are sufficiently diverse to assure that the community's educational needs for such courses are being met.
 - The schedule for offerings is flexible, providing coursework at those hours and in those time segments most appropriate to the requirements of students.
 - The length of the various courses need not coincide with the semester or quarter organization of the school.
 - The qualifications for teachers of noncredit courses are subject to the discretion of the local governing board.
 - Reasonable fees may be charged for noncredit courses.
- PS 16 An advisory committee representative of the community is involved in the review and planning of the school's educational program. The role of the advisory committee is consistent with state and federal guidelines, including recommending professional development opportunities for staff.

Teaching-Learning

The teaching-learning program is designed to continually press students to higher levels of development. Students are expected to be actively engaged in challenging and rigorous educational activities essential to the successful functioning of an individual in a democratic society. The teaching-learning program focuses on the learning goals that have been established.

- PS 21 The teaching-learning program is organized to allow each student to progress in a manner that is flexible and in accordance with individual development.
- PS 22 The teaching-learning program emphasizes the interrelationships among curricular areas.

- PS 24 Teachers use classroom practices and methodology consistent with current research.
- PS 25 The school uses the results of instructional assessments to press for higher levels of learning for all students.
- PS 26 A total pattern of successful postsecondary and related instruction requires many important components that member schools provide. Required components are:
1. well defined instructional objectives stated in behavioral terms
 2. clearly written course syllabi for all instructional and supervised clinical components
 3. performance criteria for specific skills
 4. systematic planning by professional staff
 5. the selection and use of varied types of instructional materials and learning experiences
 6. the specific adaptation of organizational and instructional procedures to meet the needs of students
 7. the use of varied evaluation instruments and procedures.
 8. good instruction
 9. concern for student morale

Staff Development

The school has a staff development program that is responsive to the unique needs of the students and personnel, the characteristics of the educational program, and the student performance goals of the school improvement plan.

- PS 30 All personnel are provided staff development commensurate with their assignment.
- PS 31 Staff development programs are designed through needs assessments with input from personnel and a review of industry standards in planning and evaluating of the programs.
- PS 32 Orientation is provided for all personnel new to the building.
- PS 33 A staff development plan is in place, and staff development activities are connected to and supportive of the school's improvement plan.

Assessment

The school has an assessment system that is broad in scope and appropriate to document student development. The results of assessment are used to (a) establish a teaching-learning program that reflects the strengths, interests, and needs of the students and community; (b) improve student performance; and (c) determine the degree to which the school is successful in achieving its goals.

- PS 40 The school uses a variety of measures including classroom and standardized measures, and industry standards leading to credentials to document the success of its students.
- PS 41 Assessment and analysis measures are congruent with the learning goals.

- PS 42 Students receive regular and frequent feedback on their progress.
- PS 43 Assessment of student learning is the primary indicator for documenting the effectiveness of the overall program.
- PS 44 The school collects information from entering students to help establish a teaching-learning program that is ready to accommodate the learners.

Pupil Personnel Services

Pupil personnel services are comprehensive and designed to enhance the intellectual, personal, physical, social, and career development of all students.

- PS 50 Pupil personnel services include but are not limited to advisement, counseling, appraisal, staff consulting, referral, new student orientation, tutoring, learning processes, and educational and career planning.
- PS 52 The school has procedures in place for providing health services to students.
- PS 53 The school has written plans and procedures in place for providing interventions and counseling services to students in cases of traumatic events.
- PS 54 The school has the necessary professional and support pupil personnel services staff to implement the program consistent with the needs of the student population.
- PS 55 Appropriate materials, facilities, and services are available for students whose exceptional abilities, talents, or handicaps represent unique needs.
- PS 56 The school has a written description of the advisement and guidance program specifying the services performed and the personnel delivering these services.
- PS 57 Interest, aptitude, and needs inventories are used in the advisement and guidance of individual students. For those students admitted on the basis of ability to benefit, the assessment includes student aptitude that documents the potential to successfully complete the student's declared program. Note: The assessment for ability to benefit students must be a nationally recognized, standardized, or industry-developed admissions test.
- PS 58 Each member school provides organized services to aid present and prospective students in the solution of their various types of educational, occupational, social, civic, and personal problems. Ability to benefit students are closely monitored during their initial year to ensure their capacity to complete the program to which they have been admitted.
- PS 59 The school's guidance services provide for counseling, appraisal, staff consulting, educational and occupational planning, and follow-up activities.
- PS 60 The member school provides qualified counselors/advisors at a ratio of at least one for each 450 students (full-time equivalency) with no school having less than a half-time

person. Schools are encouraged to try a variety of approaches to augment such services, including individual school ratio adjustments. They may use advisors, counselors, job placement officers, supportive personnel, and teachers. Instructors with occupational backgrounds can serve in a valuable occupational advisor role. Plans for organizational variations are to be submitted to the Board of Trustees for approval.

- PS 61 The school provides organized and systematic counseling and placement services for those students seeking further education and/or job placement.
- PS 62 The school has in place admission policies designed to determine if students are prepared to be successful.
- A clearly defined policy on transfer students is published in all admissions materials.
 - Recruitment and advertising materials are accurately written and include program objectives
 - Specify all charges and fees, enrollment procedures, and cancellation and refund policies.
 - Enrollment contracts clearly specify obligations for student and school.
 - Academic calendars include terms, academic years, contact hours, and projected completion timelines.
 - Grading policies and completion requirements are clearly stated in all publications.
 - Catalogs, calendars, grading policies, advertising, and other publications are made available to all students and for peer team review.
 - The school has written policies for informing students of loan availability.
 - Each school has a written student loan default management plan that is made available to students.
- PS 63 Each school has in place a procedure for dealing with student grievances and complaints. Records are kept of all such complaints and made available to the accreditation team.
- PS 64 Each school has in place a non-discrimination policy that forbids discrimination in the admission of students on the basis of race, ethnic background, sex, or handicap. Nor shall the school discriminate on the basis of religion unless the school is officially church-related and wishes to admit students mainly from communicants of that denomination. Schools that have been designed specifically to serve a single sex or that are supported by a state or federal agency to serve a specialized group of students shall not be considered discriminatory.
- PS 65 A clearly defined written code of student conduct supports a safe and orderly environment that is conducive to learning and is understood by students and faculty.
- PS 66 Communication with prospective students is ethical and honest. Information and promotional materials, advertising, and representations made by or on behalf of the school make only justifiable and provable claims regarding the courses, programs costs, location, instructional personnel student services, outcomes, benefits, and institutional financial stability.

VISION, LEADERSHIP-GOVERNANCE, AND SCHOOL COMMUNITY

The school community consists of the school's faculty and staff, its students and their parents, and the other adults in the community served by that school. The school's leadership works with the school's community for the improvement of student success. The school community's vision is expressed through its statements of mission, goals, and current improvement initiatives. Such improvement initiatives require the school community to regularly assess and act upon its student performance data and to use these data to plan and implement programs that are effective in attaining the goals of the school and the NCA Standard. All members of the school community share the responsibility for improving student success.

Vision

The governing board, working with the staff and community, develops and maintains a written statement of mission and goals to be served by the educational program.

- VL 1 There is a written statement of the school's beliefs, the learning process, and the commitments of the school community in promoting student learning.
- VL 2 There is a written statement of the school's mission and goals, which is the guiding document for the school and its programs.
- VL 3 The mission and goals statement is developed through appropriate participation by the staff, parents, students, and community representatives.
- VL 4 The mission and goals statement clarifies the purpose of the school.
- VL 5 Provision is made for systematic review and, when necessary, modification of the mission and goals statement.

Leadership-Governance

- VL 10 There is an school governing board that develops policies appropriate to the needs of the school. Whether elected or appointed, representatives on the governing board represent the interests of the school community.
- VL 11 Individual board members do not engage in transactions for the school without prior and specific authorization by a majority of the governing board.
- VL 12 There is an administrator who is responsible for providing effective educational leadership and administering the schools in accordance with governing board policies.

- VL 13 The working relationships between the governing board and the administrator establish a climate for articulating and promoting the educational vision in the school community.
- VL 15 The governing board and school-level administration work to secure resources to support continued improvement initiatives in the school.
- VL 16 The school has an administrator responsible for organizing the school's program to improve student performance and has the authority and resources to accomplish this goal.
- VL 17 The working relationship between the system-level and school level administrator facilitates the effective operation of the school in pursuit of its mission.
- VL 18 The administrator, staff, and community work together to attain the mission and goals of the school.
- VL 19 The working relationships between the administrator and staff facilitate a climate that supports innovation and creativity in helping all students achieve the specified learning goals.

School Community

The school establishes meaningful relationships with its community to promote and enhance the achievement of the school's learning goals.

- VL 25 There is a planned public communications program using a variety of media to inform the school community about the goals, programs, and results of the school's improvement efforts.
- VL 26 The school and community work together to provide the highest quality education for its students.
- VL 27 There is a planned and functioning program whereby community resources are identified and utilized for the enhancement of the curricular program in achieving the goals of the school and the NCA Standard.

Visitation Teams

- VL29 Each member school with an enrollment of 500 students or less shall annually designate at least two staff members to serve on site visit teams. Schools with a student enrollment of 501 students or more shall designate three staff members to serve on site visit teams. At least one of the designees must be a practicing instructor or an individual with teaching experience in a postsecondary curricular area.
 - Designated staff must attend the required training for NCA CASI team members or have attended such training in the previous four years.
 - Designated staff must be released from their duties to serve on a minimum of one site visit team annually when so requested by the Commission.
 - Release time to serve on a required visit team shall not result in personal cost or penalty to the team member.

RESOURCES AND ALLOCATION

The space, facilities, and environment of the school are safe for students and of a size, configuration, and condition to properly serve the attainment of the goals of the school. Those people serving students are qualified to do so through documented training and experience. Sufficient time is organized so that the mission, goals, and current improvement initiatives can be fulfilled. A coordinated system designed to increase students' access to information and expand their knowledge base is available. Sufficient financial resources are available to provide space, people, time, materials, and instructional programs to maximize the potential for all students to make successful life transitions.

Time

- RA 1 Interruptions to instructional time are kept to a minimum, and the amount of time devoted to student learning is maximized.
- RA 2 Planning/conference time is used appropriately so that staff may effectively meet the needs of students.
- RA 3 Within the workday, each classroom teacher's schedule includes time for office hours, conferences, and instructional planning. The standard does not apply to people involved in special services such as administrators, advisors, librarians, and to people teaching fewer than 25 hours per week.
- RA 4 A member school organizes its schedule of classes in a pattern most appropriate to achieving the objectives of the program and may provide varying time periods as need arises. Time periods must conform to state requirements.
- RA 5 The length of the regular academic year for students is at least 180 days, with classes actually in session for at least 175 days. The length of the academic year is a minimum of 30 weeks.
- RA 6 A school day must be at least six clock hours. Students may be assigned for all or any portion of this time. Schools must offer classes a minimum of three hours per day for four days each week during the 30 weeks. However, alternate plans may be presented to the Board of Trustees for consideration and approval.
- RA 7 The instructional program recognizes the wide diversity of student interests and experiences, providing for independent instruction and continuous study in addition to formal classes based on daily, weekly, semester, or quarterly schedules. All programs must be measured in either credit or clock hours.

Space

- RA 10 All space and facilities utilized by the school are of appropriate size, configuration, and condition to enhance the achievement of the goals of the school.
- RA 11 The site and facilities provide a safe and healthful environment with proper provisions taken to prevent injuries. Power and electrical equipment meet state and federal standards. Personal safety equipment is provided and its use enforced.
- RA 12 Fire, police, health, or other designated officials conduct regular safety inspections. All legal safety requirements are observed.
- RA 13 Inspections of the site, building, and equipment and evaluation of the safety and emergency procedures are conducted regularly. Identified hazards and deficiencies are dealt with promptly.
- RA 14 Provisions are made for the security and safety of students. The following plans are identified, communicated, practiced and evaluated:
1. Evacuation plan
 2. Shelter in place plan
 3. Lock down plan
 4. Abuse and harassment prevention and reporting
- RA 15 The site is readily accessible to the population; as free as possible from traffic, other hazards, and distracting noise; and of sufficient size.
- RA 16 The building is clean, attractive, in good repair, and (where required) barrier free to serve the needs of all students.
- RA 17 Recognized standards and legal requirements for heating, ventilation, and illumination are met.
- RA 18 Facilities and equipment are appropriate in size, type, and quantity for the students attending the school including students with special needs. Equipment and supplies are related to course and learning experience requirements. Appropriate space is provided for storage, materials preparation, and consultation.
- RA 19 The buildings and grounds are maintained with consideration for functional and aesthetic values.
- RA 20 Permanent records of students and staff are protected from theft, fire, or other damage.
- RA 21 Facilities are open, as necessary to accomplish the mission and goals of the school, for extended hours and days for student and public use.
- RA 22 In cases in which a secondary program and an adult program share facilities but are separately administered, the proper authority clarifies each administrator's area of responsibility.

- RA 23 The facilities are adequately supplied with equipment sufficiently modern and usable to effect sound instructional/learning programs.
- RA 24 An appropriate plan for the replacement of equipment is established and maintained.
- RA 25 Written and performance evaluations are maintained of students' demonstrated ability to use equipment and facilities according to established safety standards.

Personnel

- RA 30 The staff is of sufficient quality and number and appropriately assigned so that the school can achieve its goal, meet the needs of the students and the *Standard and Criteria*. Part-time faculty may be used to supplement full-time faculty.
- RA 31 Schools enrolling fewer than 250 students (full-time equivalency) employ an administrative head who devotes at least half time to the administration and supervision of the school. Schools enrolling 250 or more students (full-time equivalency) employ a full-time administrative head.
- RA 32 In order to permit the administrator to have sufficient time to engage in improvement of instruction, assistance is provided as follows: When, on a full-time equivalency basis, enrollment exceeds 500, at least one half-time assistant; when enrollment exceeds 1,000 students, at least one full-time assistant. Therefore, for each additional 1,000 students or major fraction thereof, at least one full-time assistant is provided. Schools may vary their approaches to administrative staffing and submit their plan to the Board of Trustees for approval.
- RA 33 The school is in compliance with state and federal laws regarding equal employment opportunities.

Preparation and Qualifications

- RA 40 All professional personnel meet the regular certification or licensure standards of the state, unions, or appropriate trade and industry associations and are assigned to teach in areas for which they are prepared. Official records for all professional staff members are on file in the school's office.
- RA 41 All teachers in schools approved for postsecondary education meet the requirements for instructors as established by the appropriate state governing body.
- RA 44 Professional staff members employed as advisors have at least 18 semester hours of graduate preparation in guidance and counseling or social work.
- RA 45 Media specialists in adult schools meet state teacher certification requirements and have earned a minimum of 18 semester hours of library/media coursework. Persons employed

primarily as audio-visual specialists have at least 12 semester hours of credit in this field. Media specialists have specific educational preparation appropriate to the needs of the media program in each school.

- RA 46 Health Personnel: Members of the non-instructional professional staff providing health services meet the health certification requirements of the state in which the school is located.
- RA 47 The administrative head of the school has earned at least 45 hours of graduate credit, inclusive of the master's degree, or has met the requirements established by the state plan for technical, and adult education and was serving as the head of a technical/adult school prior to July 1, 1999. Not less than 20 hours of graduate credit has been in administration, curriculum, supervision and related fields. The administrative head has a minimum of two years of successful teaching experience. It is desirable that the administrative head be acquainted with the field of postsecondary education through preparation or work experience. In addition, she/he must hold an appropriate supervisory (administrative) certificate when such is required by state statute or by the state plan.
- RA 48 Assistants whose responsibilities include curriculum, instruction, and general administration have at least the master's degree including training in postsecondary-level administration, supervision, curriculum, and/or guidance. Other administrative assistants have preparation or experience appropriate to their responsibilities.
- RA 49 In adult school scheduling 25 or fewer hours per week, the administrative head has at least the master's degree, including work in such areas as adult education, career-technical education, administration, supervision, and curriculum.
- RA 50 Special education. Teachers hold a valid certificate for the respective field in which they are teaching.
- RA 52 Class size is adapted to the requirements of the specific course.
- RA 53 The teaching load is such that teachers have adequate time to perform their duties.
- RA 54 The professional evaluation process provides for regular evaluation of staff and includes professional growth opportunities relevant to the area of assignment.
- RA 55 The evaluation criteria for instructional staff are based on research and best practice.

Finances

- RA 60 Sufficient financial resources are available to accomplish the mission and goals of the school.
- RA 61 All income and expenditures are safeguarded through proper budgetary procedures and are audited annually, according to GAAP by an outside agency, or as required by law. The independent audit is submitted to NCA CASI on an annual basis.

Public Institutions

Sources of funds and revenue are identified to show evidence of fiscal stability as reported on the independent audit. The audit should indicate that the school operates within their annual budget.

Non-Public Institutions

The following conditions exist to indicate financial stability:

1. Total assets is equal to or exceeds total liabilities.
2. Positive equity as illustrated on the balance sheet.
3. Positive net income as illustrated on the income statement.

Separate income statements must be included for each branch campus.

- RA 62 The budget is based upon an assessment of resources needed to accomplish the mission and goals of the school.
- RA 63 The administrator and faculty are involved in developing the budget, in establishing expenditure allocations, and in setting priorities with the budget.
- RA 64 In analyzing the resources needed, the school makes appropriate use of community resources and community advisory groups.
- RA 65 In order to become a member school and to continue to qualify for accreditation, the school enrolls a sufficient number of students and employs an adequate number of qualified staff. Tuition and fees take into account program length, objectives, content, types and location of instructional delivery, the knowledge and skills necessary to achieve competence, and generally accepted practices.
- RA 66 All coursework required in the program is provided, even though board funds may have to be used in cases where student fees are not sufficient to make the course self-supporting.
- RA 67 The budget includes adequate funds for the necessary amortization of equipment purchases over a reasonable period of time.
- RA 68 The member school demonstrates that it assesses its financial condition at adequate intervals, not less than quarterly.
- RA 69 Processes exist for proper financial controls and supervision of financial management staff.
- RA 70 Qualified individuals administer and evaluate the effectiveness of the financial operations and practices.
- RA 71 Receipt and expenses of monies is properly recorded and tracked.

- RA 72 Tuition, payment, cancellation, and refund policies are written, consistently Administered, and comply applicable federal and state regulations.
- RA 73 The member school must provide documentation of legal authority and license to operate in the state including contact information for the administrative head and owner where applicable, and an organizational chart.
- RA 74 The member school must have been in existence for a period of at least two years prior to applying for membership to NCA.

Instructional Resources

Students have access to a broad range of information through an organized media and technology program that makes maximum use of local, state, national, and international resources.

- RA 80 Member schools employ a professionally prepared individual as learning center coordinator. Schools exceeding 500 full-time students (full-time equivalency) have a full-time professional coordinator. The professional staff provides such services as instructing students in the use of the center, assisting teachers in locating and utilizing resources, and overseeing the production of graphic and other materials. Upon approval of the Board of Trustees, an alternative staffing pattern may be used by the school if its schedule or relationship with other schools warrants such a variation.
- RA 81 A sufficient collection of materials exclusive of the adopted texts and appropriate for the school's instructional needs is provided.
- RA 82 Educational materials may be stored in a central library/resource center and/or decentralized resource area. Other resources in the community may be considered in determining the sufficiency of the materials collection, provided they are readily accessible to the students.
- RA 83 The annual expenditures for all media are adequate to meet the instructional needs of the school.
- RA 84 Ongoing instruction is provided for staff and students to ensure effective and appropriate use of all materials available through the center.
- RA 85 Provision is made for equipment, basic materials, space, and instruction for the staff and students in designing and producing instructional/learning materials. Provision is made for the replacement and updating of all materials.
- RA 86 Media and technology materials and equipment are available to staff and students throughout the instructional day and throughout the academic year.

Information and Communication Technology

- RA 90 The school has an ongoing technology plan that addresses utilization, staff development, effectiveness, and the needs of all students and staff.
- RA 91 The technology plan includes a budget that meets the needs of students.
- RA 92 The school has access to current technology.
- RA 93 All technology resources are conveniently accessible to all students, faculty, and staff and are integrated across the curriculum.
- RA 94 Personnel with appropriate expertise are available to assist students and staff in making effective use of all technology resources.