

BY-LAWS

ACCREDITATION COMMISSION OF THE TEXAS ASSOCIATION OF BAPTIST SCHOOLS

Article I. *Officers and Committees*

- A. To be eligible to serve as an officer of ACTABS, a person must have served as a delegate to the Commission for a minimum of one year.
- B. Each year the President appoints a three-member nominating committee from the Board of Commissioners of ACTABS by February 1. This nominating committee presents a slate of recommended persons for election at the March meeting of ACTABS. An opportunity for additional nominations from Commissioners is provided. Elected officers assume office at the beginning of the fiscal year.

- C. The officers to be nominated and elected every two years are:

President	Vice-President
Secretary/Custodian of Records	Treasurer
Chairman of Standards Committee	

Members of the Standards Committee are nominated by the Nominating Committee also, but are not officers.

- D. An officer may be re-elected for one additional consecutive term only.
- E. The duties of the officers are to:
 - 1. The duties of the President are to:
 - a. preside over all meetings
 - b. appoint the nominating committee
 - c. appoint ad hoc committees as needed
 - d. keep member-schools informed on pertinent developments relative to their professional concerns.
 - 2. The duties of the Vice-President are to:
 - a. annually produce a high-quality brochure that serves as a directory of accredited schools and which includes the accreditation standards.
 - (1) Distribution of the brochures

- (a) twenty-five copies at no cost to each member-school for distribution to board-members, parents, sponsoring churches. (Additional copies may be ordered by member-schools at a charge of cost plus 10% each.)
 - (b) to professional education associations in Texas and beyond
 - (c) to foundations
 - (d) to denominational agencies
 - b. preside in the absence of the President
 - c. publish the ACTABS Operations Manual which is to be available annually to all Southern Baptist schools in Texas
- 3. The duties of the Secretary/Custodian of Records are to:
 - a. serve as custodian of ACTABS records (which are kept in the office of the ACTABS Executive Director).
 - b. certify delegates to any ACTABS meeting and establish a quorum
 - c. keep the list of member-schools and terms of accreditation current
 - d. assist the President with mail-outs
 - e. prepare and distribute minutes of each ACTABS meeting
 - f. serve as ex-officio secretary to the Standards Committee
- 4. The duties of the Treasurer are to:
 - a. serve as custodian of all ACTABS funds and act as comptroller of the annual budget
 - b. serve as a member of the budget-planning committee (along with other members of the Executive Committee)
 - c. send statements for the collection of dues and fees
 - d. prepare a financial statement for each stated meeting of ACTABS

F. The Executive Committee

- 1. The Executive Committee is composed of the President, Vice-President, Secretary/Custodian of records, Treasurer, Chairman of the Standards Committee, the President of TABS.
- 2. The Executive Committee shall meet prior to the opening session of the annual TABS convention and at other times as called by the President.
- 3. Duties of the Executive Committee include formulating the annual budget and coordinating the activities of ACTABS. The

committee has the authority to name a replacement for the unexpired term of any officer who vacates his position during his fiscal year.

4. The Executive Committee assures the reliability of the accreditation process.
 - a. The Executive Committee of the Commission annually reviews and analyzes its standards, policies, and procedures at the fall stated meeting. Member-schools may submit their suggestions to the Commission in writing at least two weeks prior to the stated meeting.
 - b. The policies, evaluation methods, and decisions are reviewed by a panel of educators representing the teaching profession.
 - c. ACTABS uses its standards as the sole guide for evaluating the quality of a school.

G. The Standards Committee

1. The Standards Committee is composed of a chairman and four members.
2. The chairman and members of the Standards Committee are elected annually after being nominated by the Nominating Committee. All members of the Standards Committee (including the chairman) must be from different schools.
3. The term of a committee member is one year, and each member may be re-elected no more than once.
4. The Standards Committee will meet as often as necessary to conduct its business.
5. The duties of the Standards Committee are to:
 - a. provide and coordinate consultative services to Southern Baptist and other schools in Texas seeking accreditation
 - b. receive applications of schools seeking accreditation
 - c. review self-study documentation
 - d. facilitate site visits to candidate schools
 - e. act upon applications for accreditation
 - f. make recommendations for approval, disapproval, or other pertinent proposals concerning applicant schools to convened meetings of ACTABS
 - g. receive annual and interim reports from member schools, audit, and bring recommendations to ACTABS for action

H. Composition of Visiting Teams

1. Each visiting team is appointed by the Standards Committee.
2. Each visiting team is directed by a chairman who is approved by the ACTABS Standards Committee and the head of the school seeking accreditation. Other team-members are selected from a list of names submitted by heads of the member-schools. The number of team-members is proportional to the size of the applicant school and the grades offered, but in no case is there to be less than three (3) members. The team-members are to have appropriate education and experience to make professional judgments about the total school program.

I. Executive Director

1. The executive director will be employed to perform such duties as assigned by the executive committees of TABS and ACTABS in relationship to the job description.

Article II. *Meetings and Governance*

A. Meetings of ACTABS may be stated or called.

1. Stated meetings are held twice each year. One stated meeting is held in conjunction with the annual convention of the Texas Association of Baptist Schools. A second stated meeting is held during the fall months with the time and place being established at the ACTABS meeting in conjunction with the TABS convention.
2. A called meeting may be held at any reasonable time and place upon a majority consensus of the Executive Committee. A meeting must be called when a petition, signed by one-half of the membership plus one requesting such a meeting is submitted to the President.

B. A quorum is necessary for conducting any business of the Commission at stated or called meetings. A quorum is established when the Secretary/Custodian or Records certifies that authorized delegates from member-schools numbering one-half the membership plus one are present.

C. The chief administrative officer of each ACTABS member-school is authorized to name two delegates to the Commission each year, usually him/herself and one other staff person.

1. The delegate from a delegate school in attendance at an ACTABS stated or called meeting is entitled to one vote. No votes by proxy are allowed.
2. The chief administrative officer of a member school has the authority to appoint a substitute delegate when it is impossible for the official delegate(s) to attend a particular stated or called meeting. This must be done in writing with appropriate signature prior to the meeting; or, the substitute delegate may bring the letter in person to the meeting.

Article III. *Fiscal Year*

The fiscal year of ACTABS shall commence on July 1 and end on June 30. All budget items and expenditures, as well as terms of officers and school memberships, shall transpire during this designated time.

Article IV. *Accreditation Process*

- A. A school applies for accreditation and membership in ACTABS by submitting a prescribed application to the Standards Committee. The application must be approved by the governing body of the school in advance, and the appropriate non-refundable application fee must accompany the application.
- B. The applicant school is authorized to initiate its self-study by the Standards Committee. Consultation with the Standards Committee must occur and a timetable for completing the process must be provided.
- C. The applicant school completes its self-study. After approval by the school's governing body, copies will be sent to each member of the Standards Committee and to each member of the Visiting Team.
- D. The Standards Committee schedules an on-site visit by a team of professionals. The applicant school reimburses the expenses of the visiting team-members upon receiving the required documentation. No report is required to be given to the applicant-school at the end of the visit. However, the visiting team prepares a rough draft of its findings prior to departure, and a verbal report should be given to the head of the school.
- E. The visiting team includes a recommended action in the draft response of the visit. The recommendation may take one of the following forms:
 1. Recommended accreditation for ten (10) years or lesser period, with or without requirements for specific interim reports at specified dates.

OR

2. Recommended "Recognition of Candidacy" status with specific action to be undertaken by the applicant school, successful completion of which will result in a recommendation for approval of full accreditation.

OR

3. Recommended disapproval for accreditation, with specific standards cited as having been unmet.
- F. After preparation of the draft copy by the visiting team chairman, a copy of it is mailed by the chairman to the applicant-school, and an opportunity to respond to errors of fact and/or interpretation by the school is provided.
 - G. The team chairman forwards the draft copy of the visiting team report and the response of the applicant-school to the Standards Committee for consideration.
 - H. The Standards Committee presents its recommendation concerning the applicant-school's accreditation to ACTABS at its next meeting. A vote of the delegates of ACTABS in official session is taken.
 - I. The applicant-school is notified by the President. If the action is favorable, the applicant-school is accredited with any applicable stipulations, such accreditation and membership to take effect on July 1 of the next year. The school is free to publicize its new status in advertisements, brochures, or manuals.
 - J. If the applicant-school is denied accreditation status or put in the "Recognition of Candidacy" category, it has the right of appeal to the Standards Committee for reconsideration. The applicant-school which exercises this right must submit new evidence, and/or be willing to reimburse the expense of a second (probably smaller) visiting team. Such an appeal may result in a new cycle of decision making.
 - K. A school placed in "Recognition of Candidacy" status does not have to go through a new cycle of application, self-study, and team visit. There is usually a specific condition to be corrected, and when that is accomplished to the satisfaction of the Standards Committee, an affirmative recommendation will be made to ACTABS.
 - L. A school cannot remain in "Recognition of Candidacy" status more than two (2) years. If after the end of two (2) years the stipulated condition has

not been met, the connection with ACTABS is severed; and the school must go through the entire process again if it wishes to become accredited. While in the "Recognition of Candidacy" status, the school may advertise its relationship with ACTABS. The school's chief administrative officer or delegate may attend the meetings of ACTABS without vote, and the school pays one-half the annual dues.

- M. Upon accreditation by ACTABS, the school becomes a full member if Southern Baptist, or an affiliate member if not. A full member has two delegate votes in all business matters. An affiliate member may attend all meetings in an advisory capacity but without voting privilege. It can and should advertise its status as an accredited school. An accredited school will pay dues that are set by ACTABS in order to become and remain a member.
- N. An annual report is required of all member-schools. Each school is required to submit an application for continuing membership and pay the annual dues by Oct. 1 of each year.
- O. A five-year interim report is required of all member schools. This report must address recommendations that were made at the 10-year full accreditation visit. An interim visit will be made to confirm the five-year interim report. Other interim reports from ACTABS accredited schools may also be required or specified in the visiting team report. In addition, any ACTABS school must file an interim report at any time to report significant changes. "Significant changes" are defined as the addition or dropping of grades, changing of chief administrative officers, disaffiliation with the Texas Association of Baptist Schools, or any change which prevents the school from meeting accreditation standards.
- P. Schools may be accredited, warned or dropped.
 - 1. A school is accredited when it fully meets the requirements of all the standards or any deficiencies it may possess are not considered significant enough to be a violation of one or more of the standards. Any accredited school must meet the standard continuously.
 - 2. An accredited school is warned when, in the judgment of the Standards Committee, it does one of the following:
 - a. it fails to meet one (1) or more of the standards and the resulting deficiency seriously detracts from the quality of the school's education program
 - b. it consistently fails to remove or make substantial progress toward removing all deficiencies noted by the Standards Committee at the last review of the school

- c. it consistently violates all standards
 - d. deliberately and unnecessarily violates one (1) or more standards.
- 3. An accredited school which finds it impossible to continue to meet the standards or refuses to do so may be dropped from accreditation.
- 4. The Standards Committee shall analyze applications of schools seeking accreditation, review self-study documentation, implement and conduct the site visits to candidate schools, and receive annual and interim reports from member schools. Before making recommendations to the ACTABS Board of Commissioners at any stated meeting, the Standards Committee shall make every effort to allow school representatives to make corrections and remove deficiencies. At this meeting, the ACTABS Board will receive the Standards Committee's recommendations in the form of a standard report; and the ACTABS Board will either accept, modify and/or reject them. The Standards Committee shall then notify member schools or candidate schools of this action by the ACTABS Board no later than fifteen days following such action. The written notice to the schools shall include the following:
 - a. the status recommended (accredited, warned, dropped)
 - b. the violation of the standard(s) that resulted in the recommendation
 - c. a statement to the effect that schools will be given the opportunity to correct the violation before said date as determined by the ACTABS Board.
 - d. the nature of the evidence and type of report that must be furnished to the Standards Committee indicating that the deficiencies have been corrected and, when appropriate, suggestions for improvement and specific comments on the areas that are not in compliance with the standards, and
 - e. a statement explaining the right of a school to appeal a warned or dropped status.

When necessary, the Standards Committee shall conduct an appeal hearing immediately preceding the full meeting of the ACTABS Board at any stated meeting. Notice by certified mail shall be given to the chief administrative officer of the school stating the place and time of the hearing. Schools planning to appeal must provide any evidence to be heard, in writing, to the chairman of the Standards Committee at least five days before any stated meeting of ACTABS.

After conducting said hearing, the chairman of the Standards Committee shall report to the full body of the ACTABS Board. The chairman's report may include recommendations for action based on new evidence presented by the appellant school.

Member schools shall have the right of further appeal to the full body of the ACTABS board through the following procedures:

- a. A representative of the appellant school shall be permitted to make a presentation, not to exceed fifteen minutes, to the ACTABS Board.
- b. The chairman of the Standards Committee, or a designated member of the Committee, shall present the Standards Committee's evidence and recommendations, not to exceed fifteen minutes.
- c. In order for a vote to be taken on an appeal, a motion must be made by one of the assembled members of the ACTABS Board and duly seconded. The motion would, in effect, amend the report of the Standards Committee.
- d. Action of the ACTABS Board relative to any appeal shall be final.

Article V. *To Add Or Change An Accreditation Standard*

- A. Adding or changing a standard impacts on all member schools of the Commission. It is a process which should be undertaken with great care and deliberation. The following process is followed:
 1. Any proposed addition or change to the accrediting standards of the Commission must be presented in writing to the President of the Commission and mailed to all members thirty days prior to a business meeting of the representatives of the Commission. The sponsor or sponsors of the proposal must sign the proposal when submitted, and notation must be made that this is for the first reading.
 2. The proposed addition or change will be distributed in writing to all the members present at the business meeting. It must be read (first reading) to the gathered members and then discussed by the members. Opinions may be expressed and questions asked, and

the proposed addition or change may be amended if the sponsor(s) approve. Additions and changes to accrediting standards cannot be adopted by the Commission on first reading.

3. Copies of the proposed addition or changes, with amendments if applicable, must be mailed to all members of the Commission within thirty days of the adjournment of the business meeting. Notation must be made that this proposal is up for adoption at the next business meeting.
4. At the next business meeting of the Commission, the proposed addition or change, as amended, must be read and discussed a second time. Time must be allowed for all opinions to be expressed. No amendments or changes will be allowed at the second reading unless adoption is put off to a third reading at the next meeting. Once a quorum has been established, a vote of two-thirds of the members present is necessary for adding or changing a standard.
5. At least one of the readings of the proposed addition or change to the Standards must be made at a stated meeting of the Commission.
6. Any called meeting for the purpose of addition or change to the Standards must be at least one month after the first reading of the addition or change.
7. Any accreditation standard may be changed at any meeting until the set of standards is consistent with mandates or requirements officially approved by the Texas Private School Accrediting Commission (TEPSAC).

Article VI. *Amendments to the By-Laws*

- A. By-Laws may be amended by a majority vote of delegates at any stated or called meeting of ACTABS.
 1. There must be an established quorum.
 2. Proposed changes in the By-Laws and the rationale for each change must be submitted in writing to the President. The proposal must be signed by a sponsoring member delegate or delegates.

As amended March 8, 2006