National Association of State Administrators and Supervisors of Private Schools

School Visits

April 30, 2008
Session Overview

• Setting the Context
• State School Visit Survey
• Changing the School Visit
• Lessons Learned
• Questions and Answers
Context

• How will EAB's oversight process help schools advance over time and lead to better student satisfaction and learning results?

• Can there ever be a sustained and rational school advancement process without a defined strategic/institutional plan, which sets goals, creates action steps, measures results and evaluates progress?

• How do the EAB school approval, annual renewal, and school visit processes need to be redesigned to focus on results and to encourage and support school advancement?

• What result data would schools and the EAB need to collect and analyze so schools are accountable for student outcomes?
Principles

• The EAB believes the best way to protect students is to enhance the schools and their programs by holding schools accountable for outcomes data.

• The EAB believes there needs to be a cooperative working relationship with schools for institutional effectiveness to be successful.

• The EAB believes schools must develop an internal capacity for making decisions based on data, for satisfying students, and for continuous improvement.
State Survey Results

• Overview
  – Sample Size: n=48
  – Responses: n=26 (33 visits)

• When / How Often
  – 85% Prior to Approval/Licensure / ~50% Periodically
  – Most Common 2-4 Years

• Accreditation
  – Doesn’t Make a Difference for Majority

• Duration
  – 25% report >5 hours

• Staff Resources
  – Over 2/3 use only 1 person

• Guidelines/Policies
  – About ¾ have specific agency guidelines
School Visit Purpose

- Compliance
  - Standards / Regulations
- Complaints
  - Investigate / Resolve
- Documentation
  - Record Keeping
- Facilities
  - Safe
- Educational Quality
  - Curriculum / Outcomes
Changing Perspectives

- Compliance
  Only

  Institutional Effectiveness

- Promote quality, organizational accountability and continuous improvement for schools.

- School visits are part of ongoing dialogue to help school improve over time.
School Visit Redesign

- Compliance plus Institutional Effectiveness
- Researched and examined practices of other states and accrediting (national) agencies
- Convened focus group of school administrators
- Revised materials and forms to guide process
- Field-tested new visit process with schools
Types of School Visits

• Comprehensive
  – non-accredited schools will be visited every three years and accredited schools at the mid-point in accreditation cycle based on the last accreditation visit.

• Annual
  – an optional progress check of the school’s institutional plan and goals, or specific issues, may be conducted.

• New School
  – schools that are not visited prior to approval will be visited within the first six months of operation, during the second year of operation, and then placed in a regular cycle.

• Other
  – a school visit may be triggered by a complaint or other concern, and would likely be unannounced.
Prior to the Visit

- Initial letter and background information sent approximately two months prior to visit.

- EAB staff contacts the school to arrange site visit date, time and interview schedule.

- Student outcomes and satisfaction data for last three years are reviewed.

- The school catalog on file and the enrollment agreement, if used, are reviewed.

- The most recent renewal information and financial statements are reviewed.
During the Visit

• One-half to one-full day depending on size and complexity of the school.
• Tour facilities: verify school meets local occupancy, health and safety codes.
• Review student records system (school will be required to make available files for new students, refunds, and graduates).
• Verify student outcome and satisfaction data.
• Obtain current catalog, enrollment agreement, and advertising.
• Conduct interviews: owner/director/administrator, students, instructors, advisory committee members, employers, and graduates.
• Conduct an exit review with owner/administrator regarding findings and recommendations.
Sample School Visit Agenda

- 9:00 - 9:15 Facility Tour
- 9:15 - 9:30 Overview of the Process
- 9:30 - 10:00 Registrar/Admissions: Overview of Student Records
  - (five files each for new students, refunds, graduates)
- 10:00 - 10:30 Owner/Director/Administrator
- 10:30 - 11:00 Instructors
- 11:10 - 11:30 Students (close to graduation)
- 11:30 - 12:00 Advisory Committee/Employers (teleconference or in-person)
- 12:00 - 12:30 Graduates (teleconference or in-person)
- 12:30 - 1:00 EAB Staff Completes Assessment Form
- 1:00 Exit Conference with Owner/ Director to share assessment results
After the Visit

• The EAB will send a letter of findings and assessment results within two weeks of visit.
• For minor problems, conduct a follow-up telephone interview.
• Request the school submit a written school improvement plan, by a date certain, with actions, timelines and outcomes to address all problems found/identified.
• For serious problems, conduct a six-month follow-up visit to verify school improvement plan implementation.
Elements of Effective Schools

- Institutional Planning
- Advertising / Recruitment
- Fiscal Analysis & Planning
- Interview / Enrollment
- Facilities Planning
- Curriculum Development / Delivery & Evaluation
- Program Evaluation
- Graduates and Employers
- Student Services
- Staff & Instructor Selection
- Professional Development & Evaluation
- Mission
- Values
- Goals
Major Categories

- Student Records / Compliance
- Institutional Plan
- School Mission
- Admissions
- Curriculum
- Faculty / Instructors
- Student Services
- Financial Soundness / Stability

- Facilities
- Advisory Committee / Employers
- School and Program Evaluations
- Strengths
- Areas Needing Improvement
- Actions Required
Lessons Learned

• Reaction of Schools
  – Share information multiple ways.
  – Don’t provide too much information.
  – Adjust size and scope.

• Schedule
  – Ability to maintain visit pace.

• Flexibility
  – Allow staff to follow their instincts.
  – Consider how students are engaged.

• Resources
  – Visits take time.
  – Training
Questions and Answers
Student Records System Review

- New Students
- Refunds
- Graduates
Institutional Plan

• Does the school have a 2 - 5 Year Planning Cycle?
• Are all components integrated into one system?
• Are metrics defined and student outcomes data used for accountability?
• Are the institutional plan’s goals evaluated quarterly and annually updated using student outcomes data?
School Mission

• Does the school’s mission clearly identify an employment objective or continuing education benefit for students?
• Does the mission drive program development, student assessment, program evaluation, and institutional self-improvement?
Admissions

- Do the school’s admission requirements help in student selection and retention? Has the school tried to increase student retention?
- Do the interview and enrollment processes establish a “good fit?” Is the school’s advertising truthful and is the recruitment of students fair?
Curriculum

• Does the school’s written curriculum accomplish its mission?
• Do program(s) meet industry standards/need and how does the school know?
• Does the school and its faculty update curricula using feedback like student satisfaction, industry standards, employer satisfaction, graduate follow-up data, and latest research?
• Do employers judge school’s graduates as prepared and qualified?
Faculty/Instructors

• Do the school’s instructor recruitment, selection, orientation, and evaluation processes ensure the school has quality instructors/teachers?

• Does the school involve instructional personnel in evaluating student learning and program effectiveness?

• Is there a clearly defined school faculty development process?
Student Services

• Are students able access adequate advising, counseling, and placement services so students benefit fully from the instructional program?
• Is there a student complaint process?
• Is it used and what are the results?
• Does the school’s “career services” help graduates secure employment?
Financial Soundness & Stability

- Is there systematic process for financial planning and budgeting?
- Does the school budget its Institutional Plan and its goals?
- Does the school annually undergo an audit by a certified public accountant/accounting firm?
Facilities

• Do the facilities, workspace and equipment comply with local fire, building, health, and safety regulations?
• Is the school adequately equipped so students achieve the school’s program objectives?
Advisory Committees / Employers

- Does the school’s advisory committee ensure its programs are up-to-date, meet industry standards, and satisfy employers?
- Does the school regularly collect data from employees about its graduates’ competence in the work place?
- Has the school institutionalized using advisory committees and employer feedback to improve the school, its programs and its instruction?
School & Program Evaluation

- Does the school know students are learning?
- Are students satisfied with the program, instructors and the school’s administration and how does the school gather and use this information?
- Does the school know employers are satisfied with the graduates’ work place competence?
- Does the school systematically gather data about its effectiveness and use it to improve?