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   ⎯⎯⎯⎯→   Institutional
  Only   Effectiveness

- Promote quality, organizational account-ability 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

Fiscal Analysis &
Planning

Advertising /
Recruitment

Facilities Planning

Interview /
Enrollment

Mission
Values
Goals

Program Evaluation
Graduates and
Employers

Curriculum
Development, Delivery
& Evaluation

Student Services

Staff & Instructor
Selection

Professional
Development &
Evaluation

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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?