

II. School and Community

It is equally important for a school to define the relationship between its statement of philosophy and objectives and the community it wishes to serve. Certain commitments and characteristics evolve naturally from such a relationship.

- A. Admissions criteria and procedures are consistent with the stated purposes and objectives of the school and identify those students the school is best able to serve.
- B. The school only enrolls students who are able to benefit from the program offered. Once a student is admitted, there is a serious commitment to foster the student's development.
- C. Admission of students is open to all who are qualified, regardless of race, color, or national origin. There is a commitment to make such admission available regardless of ability to pay.
- D. Financial responsibilities and commitments of parents and students to the school are clearly stated in writing.
- E. There is close communication between parents and the school. Parents play a variety of roles as supporters, donors, participants, and advisors.
- F. There is an emphasis in the school's philosophy on service to the community.

III. Program

The program is defined as the totality of the experiences in learning and personal development that the school offers its students. The stated purposes and objectives of the school provide a framework within which to judge the effectiveness of the program in satisfying the individual and collective needs of the school's constituency.

- A. The school has a written program of studies which reflects and includes experiences, activities and programs necessary to meet the stated philosophy and attain the objectives of the school.
- B. The course of study for grades K-8 includes learning opportunities in the following areas: Communication/Language Arts; Fine Arts; Mathematics; Personal and Public Safety; Physical Education; Science and Health; Social Studies; Computer Education.

- C. The course of study for grades 9-12 includes learning opportunities in the following areas: Communication/Language Arts; Fine Arts; Foreign Languages; Health, Physical Fitness and Recreation; Mathematics; Personal and Public Safety; Applied Arts; Sciences; Social Studies; Computer Education.
- D. Instruction may be offered in other areas authorized by the governing board, consistent with the philosophy and objectives of the school, especially in religion.
- E. The school periodically reviews and evaluates the instructional program, and identifies the educational needs of each student.
- F. A cumulative record which reflects the educational progress and development of each student is maintained and is used by members of the school staff in developing programs for individual students.

IV. Physical Environment and Educational Resources

The physical plant of a school must be considered primarily in terms of its effectiveness in housing the school program and in providing for the physical welfare and safety of the school community.

- A. The physical plant is adequate for the program of the school. Each school has physical facilities and equipment to support the program of the school at each grade level.
- B. Each school adheres to local health and safety regulations as they apply to a school's physical facilities.
- C. Provisions are made for house-keeping, maintenance, and security of these facilities. There is a responsible plan for replacement or renovation of existing facilities, and for the provision of new facilities as needed.

Educational Resources

- A. Appropriate textbooks and instructional materials are available in sufficient quantity to serve the requirements of the program and the size of each class.

Statement of Identity and Purpose

The California Association of Private School Organizations (CAPSO) is a consortium of pre-collegiate, independent and religious school organizations which strives to promote and preserve understanding among its members, to promote excellence in education throughout the represented schools, and to preserve philosophical and religious values as well as spiritual dimensions of life which are integral parts in the development of our students.

The Association, while recognizing and encouraging a diversity of beliefs, a variety of educational philosophies, and the independence of each member, strives to represent and speak on educational issues of common concern and interest.

The Association, an affiliate member of the Council for American Private Education, supports the development of close, professional relationships, open communication and trust among various public and private educational institutions, the California Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Education.

The Association is committed to the preservation of pluralism in American education, and to the right of parents to choose an education appropriate for their own children. To assure and encourage the vitality that freedom of choice fosters, the Association makes known to the public of this state the aims, ideals, and goals to which the member organizations jointly subscribe.

The Association strives to strengthen understanding and cooperation among its member organizations through a sharing of professional talents, and to maintain standards of excellence in the private schools of California. To this end, CAPSO has developed the following statement of standards, commitments, and beliefs which all members regard as responsible guidelines for the operation of private schools in the State of California.

Private schools in the United States have a proud history, and indeed, a history that predates the provision of free public education by townships and municipalities in the eighteenth century. Sectarian and non-sectarian private schools, from the seventeenth century to the present, have educated an enormously diverse clientele, including generations of immigrants from every nation of the world. The benefits these schools have provided to American society cannot be denied. A review of the member bodies of CAPSO reveals the great diversity of private education in the United States. The organizations represent over 1,700 schools, sectarian and non-sectarian, serving approximately 75% of the California children from preschool through twelfth grade who are enrolled in the state's private schools.

4. The governing body has well established policies for the selection and evaluation of staff and administration. The terms, conditions, and responsibilities of employment are clearly defined and understood by all members of the staff and administration.

B. Role of the Administration

1. Administrative officers and staff are qualified in terms of educational background, professional training and experience.
2. The administrative staff plans, organizes and manages the school to meet the statement of philosophy and objectives, and the policies of the governing body.
3. Opportunities exist and are used by administrators to strengthen their professional competency.
4. The administration provides for the supervision of instruction and for the evaluation of the instructional and support staff.
5. The administration provides for the competent management of the resources of the school.
6. The administration ensures that complete and accurate records are maintained for all students and personnel, and for the operational needs of the school. Arrangements are made for the safety and permanent custody of records.

C. Role of the Faculty

1. Members of the professional staff are qualified by training or experience in the areas in which they are assigned.
2. The teaching faculty are sufficient in number to carry out the stated program of the school.
3. Professional procedures are used to ensure the selection of competent staff who are committed to the educational purpose and objectives of the school. Employment practices must be non-discriminatory with regard to race, color and national origin.
4. The school assumes responsibility to facilitate the professional growth and development of the staff. A regular staff development program exists to keep teachers aware of philosophy and objectives, programs, resources, organizations, and facilities of the school.

- B. The school provides, or has access to, library-media resources which support the curriculum and are appropriate to the interest and abilities of the students.
- C. There is a program for assessing the needs, growth, and progress of each student, including appropriate forms of testing and evaluation.
- D. The school provides, or has access to, guidance and counseling services adequate to meet the needs of the students, both individually and as a community.
- E. There is evidence of the availability, and use of, a variety of community agencies and resources to enrich the educational program of the school and to meet the special needs of the individual students.

V. Governance, Administration and Staff

The primary responsibility of the governing body of a school is to provide for effective implementation of the purposes and objectives of the school. The effectiveness of a school in meeting its stated philosophy and achieving its objectives depends to a large extent on the quality of its professional staff. The primary responsibilities of the administration and faculty are to support, enhance, and strengthen the educational program and to develop the school's sense of community.

A. Role of the Governing Body

1. The governing body accepts responsibility for providing leadership in the formulation of educational policy. Current policies of the governing body are in writing and are readily available to the school community.
2. The governing body accepts responsibility for the sound fiscal management of the school. The management of the financial resources is effective, and those resources are accurately accounted for. There is also a long-range financial development plan with established priorities and provisions for periodic review.
3. The governing body communicates with appropriate segments of the school community regularly.

Private schools share certain important educational practices and purposes with public schools. The good of society, the assurance of its future welfare and improvement, and the strengthening of our nation through an informed and educated citizenry are all ideals strongly held by private schools. Private schools complement, rather than compete with public schools by offering their academic programs within the context of some specifically defined set of ideals, often religious, which provide a moral and spiritual dimension to education. The programs of instruction in private schools regularly include the teachings, traditions, and doctrines which embody these ideals. Parents who specifically seek for their children an education so defined may find, among the variety of private schools, one or another with a coherent philosophy that is consistent with their own. The philosophy may or may not be professedly religious. CAPSO regards as inviolable parents' rights to choose for their children an education formulated according to certain clearly enunciated ideals and purposes, and consistent with their own beliefs, philosophy, and/or religious faith. CAPSO maintains that government should uphold such rights. The role of the government in exercising its responsibility for general supervision and control of the educational interests of the state should be directed to the principle that each child shall have equal opportunity of access to an appropriate program of educational experiences. CAPSO supports governmental attention to conditions affecting the health, welfare, and safety of children; and further, CAPSO fully subscribes to the established laws prohibiting discrimination. However, CAPSO holds that private schools may properly reserve to themselves the formulation of their educational programs and curricula, the regulation of their methods and practices, and the organization of their governance and management. Recognizing the responsibility inherent in this reservation, CAPSO has agreed upon the following guidelines and procedures as fundamental to the support of effective education. The elements outlined are regarded as the foundation of what is sound and essential in any one of the schools represented in the CAPSO membership, while at the same time such elements allow for the diversity that characterizes the educational alternatives so represented.

Statement of Standards

IV. Philosophy and Objectives

No aspect of a school is more important in the shaping of its character than its fundamental purposes as understood and practiced by the school community. These purposes and the specific objectives derived from them are crucial to maintaining a sense of direction and vitality of the school.

- A. Each school has a well-defined, written statement of philosophy and objectives which is available to all parents, students and staff.
- B. The statement of philosophy and objectives is clear, and represents the thinking and aspirations of those responsible for the development of policy in the school.

5. A plan for staff evaluation is developed, written and implemented with mutually agreed-upon goals and objectives.

VI. Evaluation

The rationale underlying the evaluation of elementary and secondary schools is the belief that such a process contributes substantially to the improvement of the instructional program, encourages clarification of the philosophy and objectives of the school, and increases understanding and involvement of the community in the process. The evaluation procedure is based on a thorough study of the total school operation, and is designed so that the resulting report will reflect as accurately as possible the character of the school and its program.

- A. A recognized set of evaluative criteria is to be used for the evaluation of schools in California. Evaluative criteria, as drawn up by school organizations and accrediting associations, are designed to:
 1. Assist each school in appraising its total educational program in light of its stated philosophy and objectives;
 2. Involve the entire staff as well as members of the school constituency in the evaluation process.
 3. Identify strengths as well as weaknesses; and
 4. Identify concerns and areas requiring further study.
- B. Secondary schools are accredited, or are candidates for accreditation, by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, and/or by member associations.

California Association of Private School Organizations

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C A P S O

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