



**Rex & Margaret Fortune**  
EARLY COLLEGE  
HIGH SCHOOL  
A FORTUNE SCHOOL

December 5, 2018

Dear Rex & Margaret Fortune Early College High School Families,

As you may be aware, Rex & Margaret Fortune Early College High School has begun the process to become WASC accredited. We are excited about the process and look forward to the opportunity to become accredited. We want to share important information that will explain accreditation.

Let's start with some background on the accreditation process for a **new school**. The overarching goal of accreditation for a new school is to have the final accreditation by the end of the third year of operation. This will ensure that all courses offered in years 1 through 3 are fully a-g compliant. Courses that are a-g compliant meet the criteria for college admission in the UC and CSU systems. (Most other colleges/universities recognize them as well.) **Rex & Margaret Fortune Early College High School is on track to earn WASC accreditation.** The first step in the process is the Initial Visit. That visit must be scheduled AFTER the first full year of operation. Rex & Margaret Fortune Early College High School submitted its application for an Initial Visit in August, 2018, which was after our first full year of operation. WASC scheduled the team to visit FHS on November 13, 2018. The visiting team observed classes in session, spoke with staff and students, and gathered information which enabled them to make a recommendation to the commission as to whether or not Rex & Margaret Fortune Early College High School should be granted either Initial Accreditation or Candidacy for Accreditation. We will know the results of the visit and the official recommendation by January. It is most likely that FHS will be granted Candidacy for Accreditation, and then Rex & Margaret Fortune Early College High School will enter the WASC self-study process which takes a year to complete. Another visiting team will come in the 2019-20 school year to evaluate our educational program and determine the length in years of our full accreditation.

The Accrediting Commission for Schools, Western Association of Schools and Colleges (ACS WASC), is a world-renowned accrediting association and one of the six regional accrediting agencies in the United States. ACS WASC provides assistance to schools worldwide, primarily in California, Hawaii, Guam, Asia, the Pacific Region, the Middle East, Africa, and Europe.

The Accrediting Commission for Schools, WASC, collaborates with other organizations such as the California Department of Education (CDE). CDE has collaborated with ACS WASC in order to align the accreditation process with the planning process for California public schools required by state and federal statutes in the Single Plan for Student Achievement (SPSA) and the Local Control Accountability Plan. Another example is the partnership with the University of California regarding the a-g course requirements.

### **What is accreditation?**

Accreditation is a voluntary dual-purpose process that schools (1) must be worthy of the trust placed in them to provide high-quality learning and (2) clearly demonstrate continual self-improvement. An accredited school is focused on a mission and goals for students; it is student-oriented and examines its students' performance continuously; it accepts objective evaluation from a team of outside peer professionals trained by ACS WASC; it maintains a qualified faculty within an effectively organized school;

it collaboratively assesses the quality of its educational programs on a regular basis; and it plans for the future.

### **Who benefits from accreditation?**

ACS WASC accreditation is a school improvement process and therefore is a process that serves as the foundation for quality education. An accredited school is a statement to the broader community and the stakeholders that it is a trustworthy institution for student learning and committed to ongoing improvement.

- The public is assured that accredited institutions are evaluated extensively and conform to expectations of performance and quality. Because accreditation requires continual self-evaluation and monitoring of its programs and operations in relation to the impact on student learning and periodic external review, the public can be assured that the educational quality of programs and services offered by the institution are current, reflect high standards of quality, and are offered with integrity.
- Students can be assured that the institutions in which they seek to enroll have been reviewed and the educational programs that are offered have been evaluated for quality.
- Educational institutions benefit from the stimulus for self-study and self-improvement provided by the accreditation process.

### **What are the steps necessary to become accredited?**

If it is determined that the school may be eligible for affiliation with ACS WASC, an Initial Visit Application will be sent to the school for completion and submission to the ACS WASC office. On receipt of the forms and approval to proceed, a two-member, one- or two-day visit to the school will be scheduled. Initial visits to newly established schools will not occur prior to the second semester of operation, i.e., a spring visit if a school opens in the fall. Following the visit, the committee will prepare a report to present to the Commission for action. This will include recommendations regarding the school's ongoing improvement. The school will be notified by the executive director of the Commission's action. If the Commission's action is favorable, the school will be granted either candidacy or initial accreditation for a term not to exceed three years.

### **ACS WASC Accreditation Process**

#### **Initial Visit Process (Completed on 11/13/18)**

- The purpose of the one- or two-day visit by a two-member team is to understand the school's purpose, its program, and operations based upon the ACS WASC criteria and detailed school description.
- If the Commission grants initial accreditation or candidacy, the school addresses recommendations from the visiting committee report and completes first full self-study by the end of the third year.

#### **Self-Study Process/Full Visit**

- Involvement of all stakeholders in the self-study process.
- Clarification of the school's purpose and the school-wide learner outcomes.
- Assessment of the student program and its impact on student learning with respect to the ACS WASC criteria.
- Development of a school-wide action plan that addresses identified areas for improvement.
- Visiting committee validation and enhancement based on accreditation criteria and standards, self-study, and findings from the visit.

#### **Follow-Up Process**

- Annual assessment of the action plan progress and refinement of the plan as needed.
- Completion of progress reports and/or reviews, e.g., annual reports.
- Celebration of success.

## **What are the criteria used to evaluate all schools?**

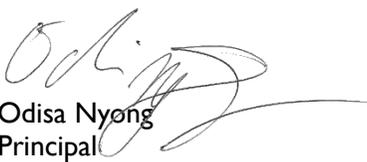
ACS WASC criteria are research-based guidelines of systemic school improvement that focus on student achievement of the school-wide learner outcomes aligned with the academic standards. The criteria guide a school in evaluation of its organization and program, e.g., leadership empowerment, continual professional learning by staff.

## **What happens if a student attends a non-accredited school and transfers to an accredited school within or outside of the WASC region?**

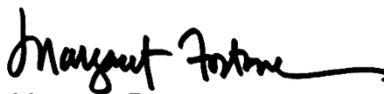
Most accredited schools at the secondary level have policies related to what credits will be accepted. In addition, schools may want to review curricular standards and courses before accepting the credits. (<https://www.acswasc.org/wasc/frequently-asked-questions/>)

We understand the importance of accreditation, and we are committed to ensuring that Rex & Margaret Fortune Early College High School achieves its goal of regional accreditation within the timeline prescribed by WASC. Stay tuned for updates as we move forward in the process.

Sincerely,



Odisa Nyong  
Principal



Margaret Fortune  
Margaret Fortune  
President/CEO