



# Accrediting Commission for Schools Western Association of Schools and Colleges

## Getting Started with WASC: The Initial Visit Process

**WASC Focus on Learning  
On Target for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools**





# WASC Presentation Outline

- **Background of WASC accreditation**
- **What is accreditation?**
- **Why accreditation is so important?**
- **WASC seven accreditation principles**
- **Focus on Learning (FOL) Accreditation's Cycle of Quality**
  - ✓ **Self-Study**
  - ✓ **The Visit**
  - ✓ **The Follow-up or Ongoing Improvement**
- **Getting Started: The Initial Visit Process**
- **Focus on Learning: A Powerful Process for School Change**





# Western Association of Schools and College (WASC)

- A private, nonprofit, regional accrediting association in the United States
- Serves schools in California, Hawaii, Pacific Islands, and worldwide, especially East Asia (The Hague, 1961)
- Composed of three commissions
  - Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities, e.g., Stanford University
  - Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, e.g., San Francisco Community College
  - **Accrediting Commission for Schools**





# Accrediting Commission for Schools, WASC

- Works closely with the U.S. Department of State, Office of Overseas Schools
- Extends services to over 4,500 pre-K to 12 elementary and secondary public and private schools of various types (225 in East Asia)
- Works with 16 other associations in joint processes, such as California and Hawaii state departments of education (CDE, HDOE, WCEA, SDA, CIS, ACSI, NLSA, and CAIS)
- WASC Commission (Board) composed of 32 members from various organizations





# WASC Accreditation: An Ongoing Journey





# What is Accreditation?

- **The quality or state of being trustworthy or credible (Root is French word meaning “to credit”)\***
- **An ongoing Cycle of Quality...**
  - **a non-hyperventilating” school improvement process that supports high-quality student learning**
- **Equivalent to a University Educational Course entitled: Change 101**

**\*Dr. John Stoops, MSA**





# Accreditation: A Value Added Evaluation

## Schools add value by...

- ❑ Increasing what students know
- ❑ Increasing what students can do
- ❑ Improving how students feel
  - about themselves
  - about others
  - about learning



**Dr. Donald G. Haught**  
Retired WASC Executive Director





# Why Accreditation?

- Assures a school community school is trustworthy for student learning in a global society
- Validates integrity of school's program and transcripts worldwide for university acceptance
- Fosters ongoing improvement to support learning
- Provides valuable insight from educators visiting the school
- Benefits schools choosing collaborative processes, e.g., WASC/CDE

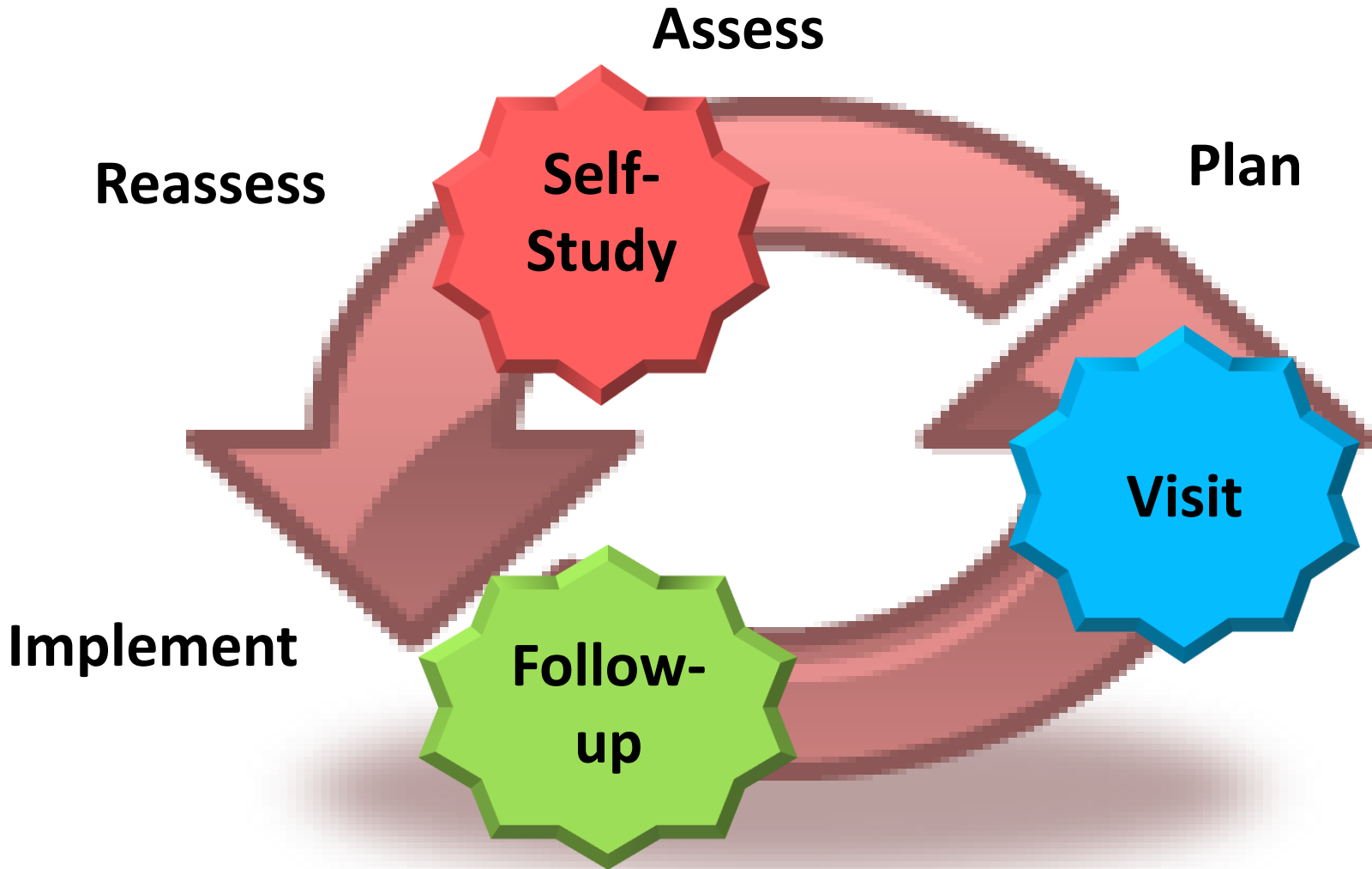








# WASC FOL Accreditation Cycle of Quality





**Focus on Learning** ↔ **School Change**

## WASC Accreditation Cycle of Quality

Built on



**WASC Seven Accreditation Principles**





# WASC Seven Accreditation Principles

- 1. Accomplishment of school purpose (core beliefs, vision, mission) and schoolwide learner outcomes...  
**What all students should know, understand and be able to do in order to be globally competent, i.e., a global citizen.****





# Schoolwide Learner Outcomes

## Characteristics:

- Include current learning needs and global competencies/21<sup>st</sup> century skills
- For all students
- Interdisciplinary (within all subjects)
- Assessable





# Sample Schoolwide Learner Outcome

**The school educates students to become:**

***Effective communicators who...***

- **express ideas, emotions, and personal experiences clearly and creatively through the written and spoken word and through the arts.**
- **listen critically with understanding and empathy.**





# Schoolwide Learner Outcomes (excerpts)

**Students will be:**

## **Global-minded Citizens who...**

- **Act with the future in mind**
- **Embrace diversity**
- **Engage responsibly in the world's problems with compassion, empathy, and tolerance**
- **Respect and support family and community**
- **Protect and advocate for local and global environments**





# Schoolwide Learner Outcomes (excerpts)

**Students will be:**

## **Literate Individuals who...**

- **Are multi-lingual**
- **Articulate communicators in reading, writing, speaking, listening, and through artistic expression**
- **Can analyze information to create new knowledge and understandings**
- **Are literate in information and communication technologies**







# EAGLES: Schoolwide Learner Outcomes (excerpts)

**Students will be:**

**Skilled Inquirers who...**

- **Apply content knowledge and skills in authentic situations**
- **Strive for academic excellence**
- **Can express themselves through sound, movement and image**
- **Apply skills and knowledge to broader systems**
- **Reason soundly and critically**





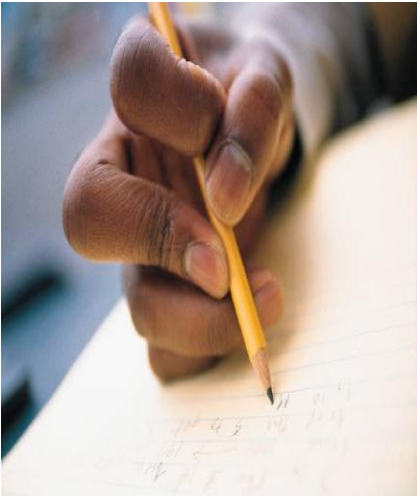
# WASC Seven Accreditation Principles

## 2. High achievement of all students based on schoolwide learner outcomes/curricular standards



# WASC Seven Accreditation Principles

## 3. Use of multiple ways to analyze data about student achievement





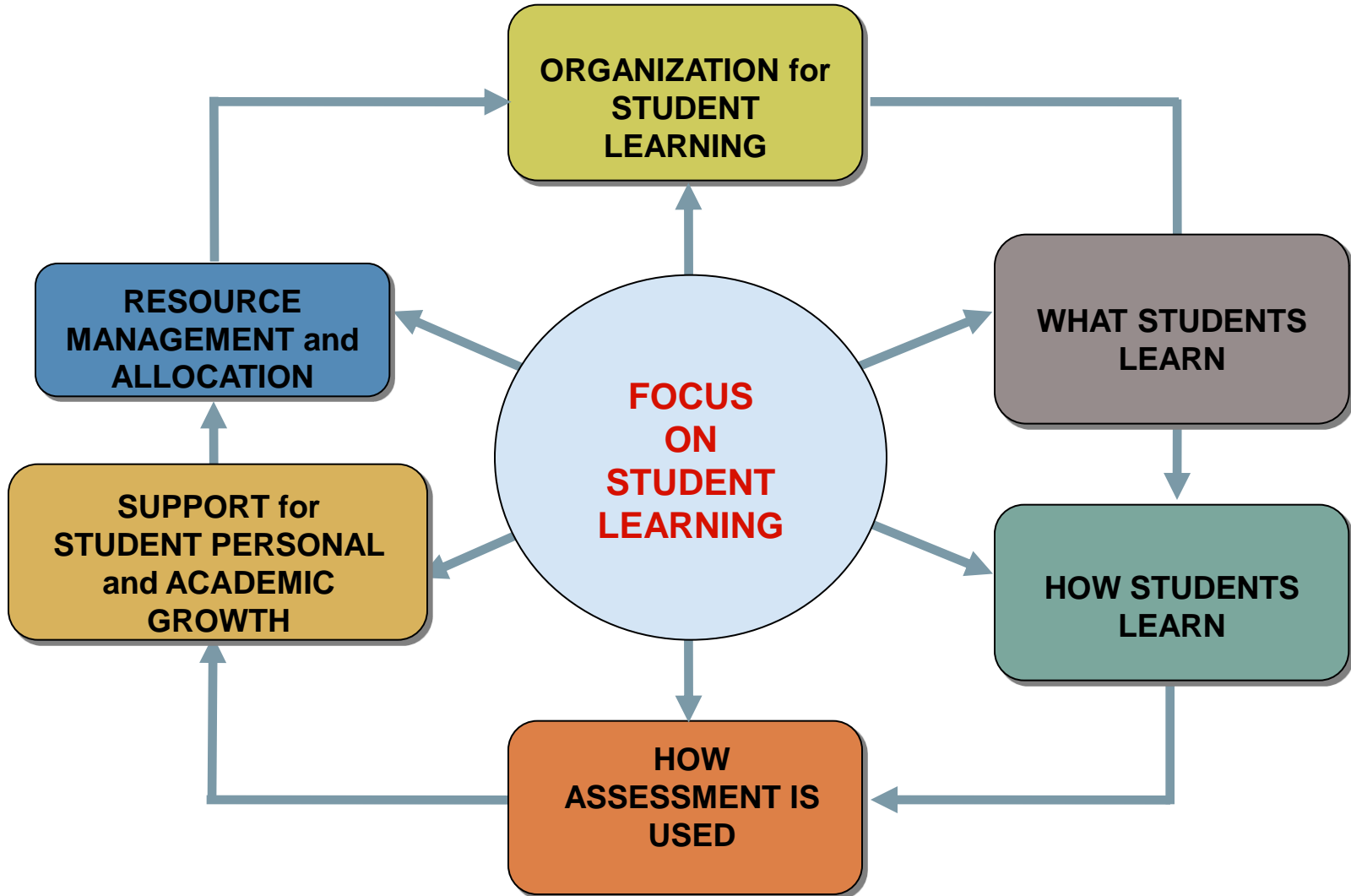
# WASC Seven Accreditation Principles

4. Program evaluation in relation to schoolwide learner outcomes, standards and research-based WASC criteria and indicators





# WASC Criteria Categories



# WASC Seven Accreditation Principles

## 5. Alignment of findings to a schoolwide action plan



- **Strategic Plan**
- **Technology Plan**
- **Professional Development Plan**



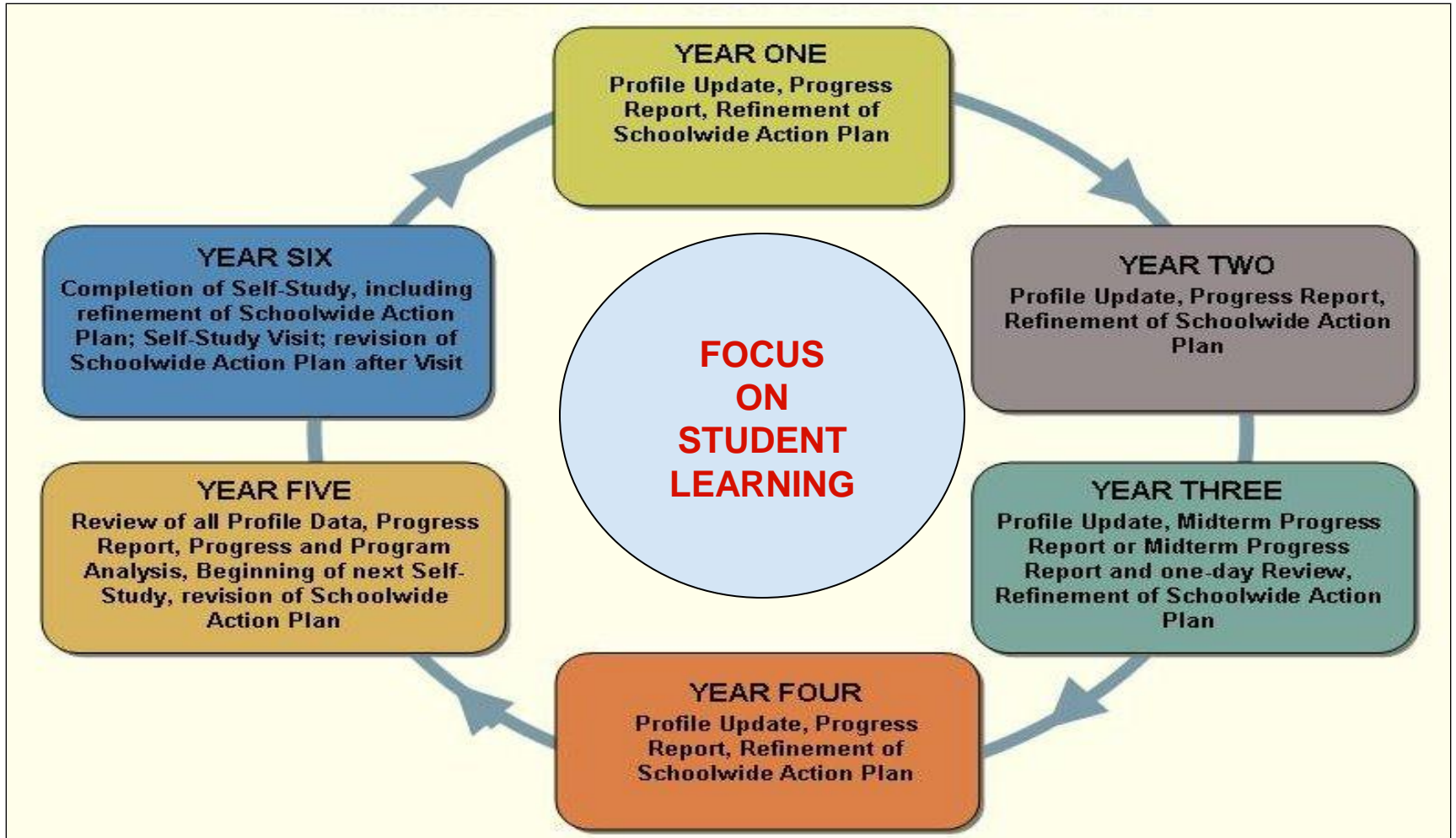
# WASC Seven Accreditation Principles

- 6. Evaluation of ongoing improvement and impact on student learning**
- 7. Total involvement/collaboration of all leaders, board members, teachers, staff, students, parents and others**





# WASC FOL Accreditation Cycle of Quality (five or six years)







# Initial Visit: Starting the Accreditation Process

- **Initial Visit**

**A one or two-day visit by a two-member team to understand the school...**

- **its vision, mission, schoolwide learner outcomes**
- **its program and operations based upon the WASC criteria**





# Affiliation Categories

- 1. Candidacy**
- 2. Initial Accreditation**
- 3. Denial**





# Affiliation Categories: Candidacy

## *A school ...*

- is progressing toward, but does not assume accreditation
- is not yet ready for the full evaluation based on the WASC criteria
- provides evidence that sound planning exists with resources to implement these plans within a reasonable time (*continued*)





# Affiliation Categories: Candidacy

## *A school ...*

- **Submits an annual progress report to WASC on recommendations integrated into an action plan left by initial visiting team**
- **Completes a self-study and undertakes a full accreditation visit by the third year of candidacy**





# Affiliation Categories: Initial Accreditation

## *A school...*

- **meets the organization and support criteria for full accreditation**
- **has a history and support system that indicates that a high quality program can be sustained into the foreseeable future**
- **completes a self-study and undertakes a full accreditation visit by the third year of initial accreditation**





# Affiliation Categories: Denial

## *A school ...*

- **does not fully meet WASC criteria for affiliation with the Accrediting Commission for Schools**
- *Note: A school may wish to re-apply after deficiencies have been remedied.*





# Initial Visit Procedures Materials

- **On-line Materials ([www.acswasc.org](http://www.acswasc.org))**
  - **Steps for WASC Affiliation**
  - **Request for WASC Affiliation Form**
  - **Conditions of Eligibility**
  - **Initial Visit Procedures Manual**
- **Materials Sent from the WASC office**
  - **Initial Visit School Description Template**





# Initial Visit Procedures

- **Submit the Request for WASC Affiliation form**
- **Pay \$150 non-refundable fee**
- **WASC will review the Request for Affiliation form; if approved, WASC will send the Initial Visit School Description template to the school for completion along with additional accreditation materials**







# Initial Visit Procedures

- **Complete and submit the Initial Visit School Description by the deadline (see Steps)**
- **Work with appointed Visiting Committee chair on date**
- **Pay invoice for the initial visit (\$600)**
- **Work with the assigned Visiting Committee chair on schedule of day**
- **Prepare documentation for review by Visiting Committee prior to and during visit**





# Initial Visit School Description

- **Part I: Identifying Data**
- **Part II: School (Student/Community) Profile**
  - **Introductory Paragraph(s)**
  - **School Description**
  - **Student Demographic Data**
  - **Analyzed and Interpreted Student Achievement Data**
  - **Student Follow-up**





# Types of Data: Demographic



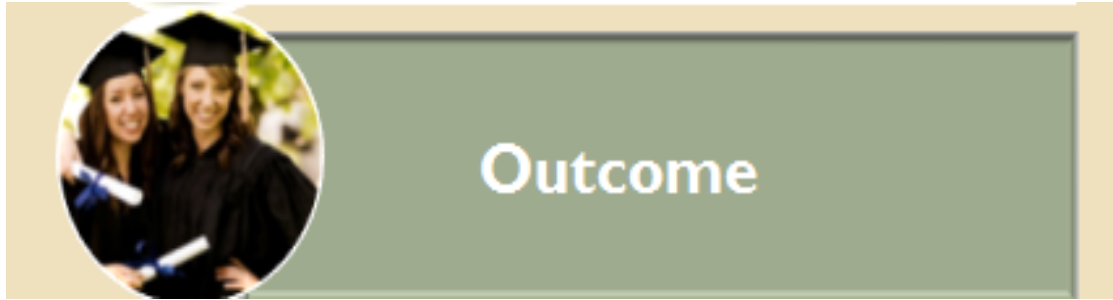
## Examples:

- Ethnicity or Nationality
- English proficiency
- Gender/age mix
- Special Populations
- Mobility of students





# Types of Data: Outcome/Achievement



## Examples:

- **Achievement**
  - **College SAT, Advanced Placement**
  - **CST**
  - **API, AYP**
  - **CELDT**
  - **ERB**
- **Post Graduation Data (University entrance)**





# Initial Visit School Description

- **Part III: The Criteria**
  - **Use the Rubrics (See the Initial Visit Procedures Manual)**



# Sample Rubric Structure for Each Criterion

**INITIAL**

**CANDIDATE**

**Examples of  
Documentation**



# Sample Rubric Structure for Each Criterion

INITIAL	CANDIDATE	EXAMPLES OF DOCUMENTATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school has established a clear statement of purpose that reflects the beliefs and philosophy of the institution.</li> <li>• The student/community profile data has impacted the development of the school purpose and the expected schoolwide learning results.</li> <li>• A high degree of involvement by representatives of the entire school community has occurred in the development of the school purpose and expected schoolwide learning results.</li> <li>• There is a clear and systematic network of communication of the school's purpose and expected schoolwide learning results within the school community.</li> <li>• Staff, students, parents, and other</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school has adopted a clear statement of purpose</li> <li>• The student/community data has impacted the development of the school purpose.</li> <li>• The school has designed a system and process to communicate the school's purpose that will lead to further development of expected schoolwide learning results.</li> <li>• Plans to carry out the school purpose are in place and implementation has begun that show</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Statement of school purpose (Note: school purpose is a general term for terminology used by schools such as vision, mission, or philosophy and objectives).</li> <li>• Schoolwide student goals (expected schoolwide learning results) and the process for development.</li> <li>• Student/community demographic and performance information and data.</li> <li>• Admission policies and materials.</li> <li>• Master schedule.</li> <li>• Any academic or</li> </ul>





# Initial Visit School Description

- **Part III: The Criteria**
  - Respond to questions for each criterion
  - Provide documentation







# Initial Visit School Description

- **Part III: The Criteria, School Purpose and Expected Schoolwide Learning Results (Schoolwide Learner Outcomes)**



# *Sample Schoolwide Learner Outcomes*

*An interdisciplinary statement about what all students should know, understand and be able to do by the time they graduate or complete the planned program*

## *Characteristics:*



- **Global**
- **Interdisciplinary**
- **All Students**
- **Assessable**

# ***Sample Schoolwide Learner Outcomes***

***Note: Schoolwide Student Goals—  
another name for expected schoolwide learning results (ESLRs)***

- **Problem solver**
- **Collaborative worker**
- **Information manager**
- **Perceptive thinker**
- **Healthy individual**
- **Academically competent individual**
- **Creative individual**
- **Technologically literate individual**

- **Involved citizen**
- **Productive worker**
- **Quality producer**
- **Effective communicator**
- **Self-directed learner**
- **Life-long learner**
- **Culturally empowered person**
- **World citizen**



# *“Every student will be an effective communicator”*

*Each student may demonstrate this by:*

- **Writing English clearly and proficiently.**
- **Receiving information and constructing meaning through reading and listening skills**
- **Using nonverbal techniques to communicate accurately with others**
- **Using verbal language to communicate clearly when giving presentations to groups or talking with other individuals**
- **Exchanging information when working in a cooperative group.**





# Initial Visit School Description

- **Part IV: School Description**
  - **Major Achievements/Accomplishments of students, staff and school**
  - **Major School Needs, focusing on student achievement**





# The Initial Visit: Learning about School



***Are students learning?***

***Are systems and operations supporting learning?***





# The Initial Visit

## The Schedule includes:

- Dialogue with all stakeholders
- Observation of students involved in the program
- Review of documentation
- Initial visiting committee report with recommendations





# Documents

For example...

- Student work
- Handbooks
- Curriculum documents
- Recruiting brochures







# Alignment of Findings to WASC Criteria





# Initial Visit Results

**WASC Commission action**



**School addresses initial visit recommendations**



**School begins and completes self-study/full visit within  
2–3 years of candidacy**





## Follow-up from the Initial Visit

- **Implementation of recommendations that have been integrated into the schoolwide action plan**
- **Update of Student/Community Profile**
- **Refinement of schoolwide learner outcomes (expected schoolwide learning results)**





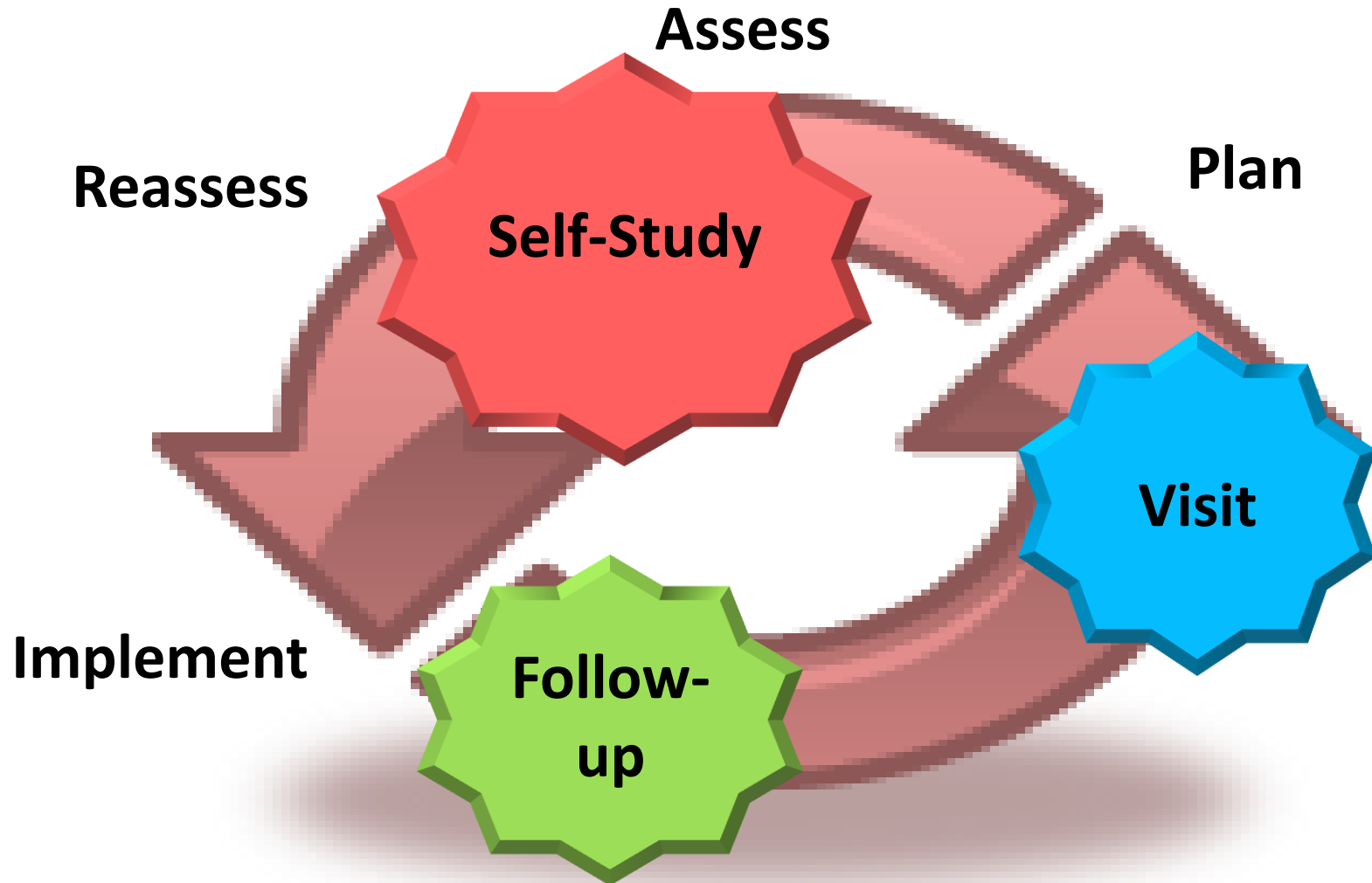
## Follow-up from Initial Visit

- **Preparation of annual progress report on school's action plan, including the progress on the recommendations left in the initial Visiting Committee report (due June 1<sup>st</sup> of following year)**
- **Pre-planning and preparation for first self-study**
  - **WASC Self-Study Training: 18 months from scheduled visit (e.g., November 2013, March 2014, September 2014 for a 2015 spring visit)**





# WASC FOL Accreditation Cycle of Quality





# Focus on Learning (FOL)

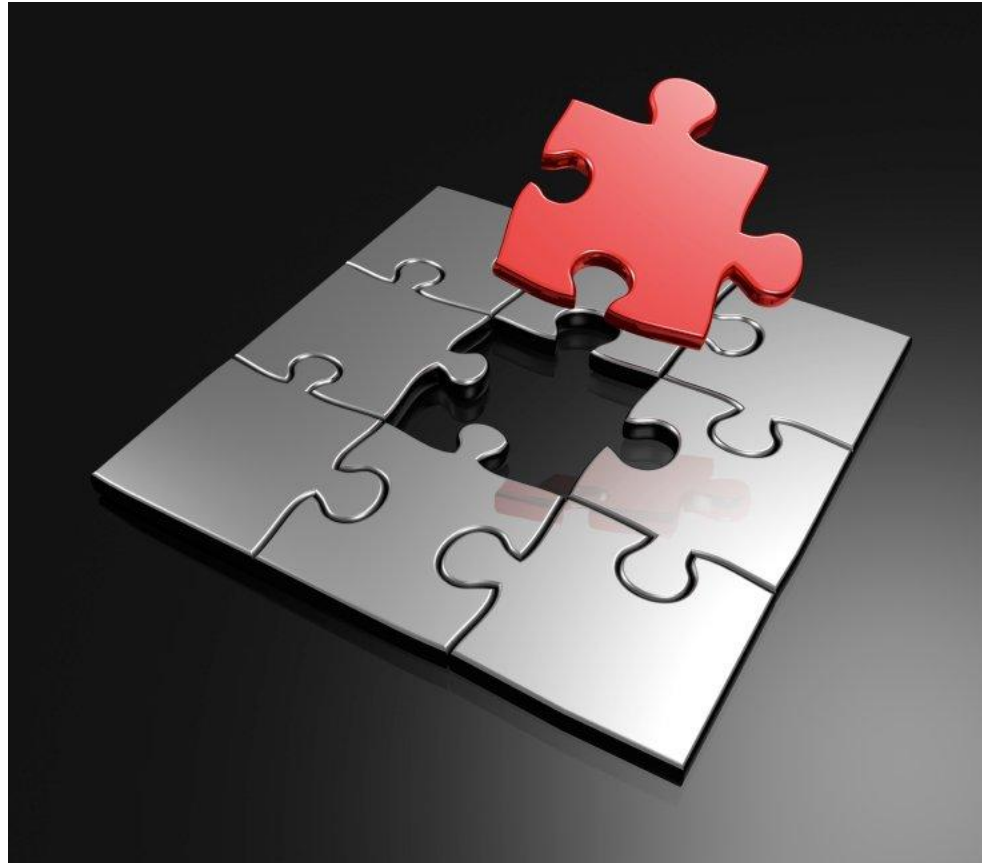
**For 20 years, WASC FOL process has asked schools two questions  
How do you know that all students are achieving...**

- ✓ **schoolwide learner outcomes**
- ✓ **essential core knowledge and skills?**
- **Are you doing everything possible to support students being global citizens?**





# Self-Study = Putting Together A Puzzle





# Summary: Focus on Learning (FOL) Self-Study Process

## **What?**

*What is the ideal based upon...?*

- *Vision, Mission, Schoolwide Learner Outcomes*
- *WASC international criteria and indicators*
- *Curricular standards*

## **So What?**

*What currently exists?*

*How effective is it?*

## **Now What?**

*What and how will we modify?*

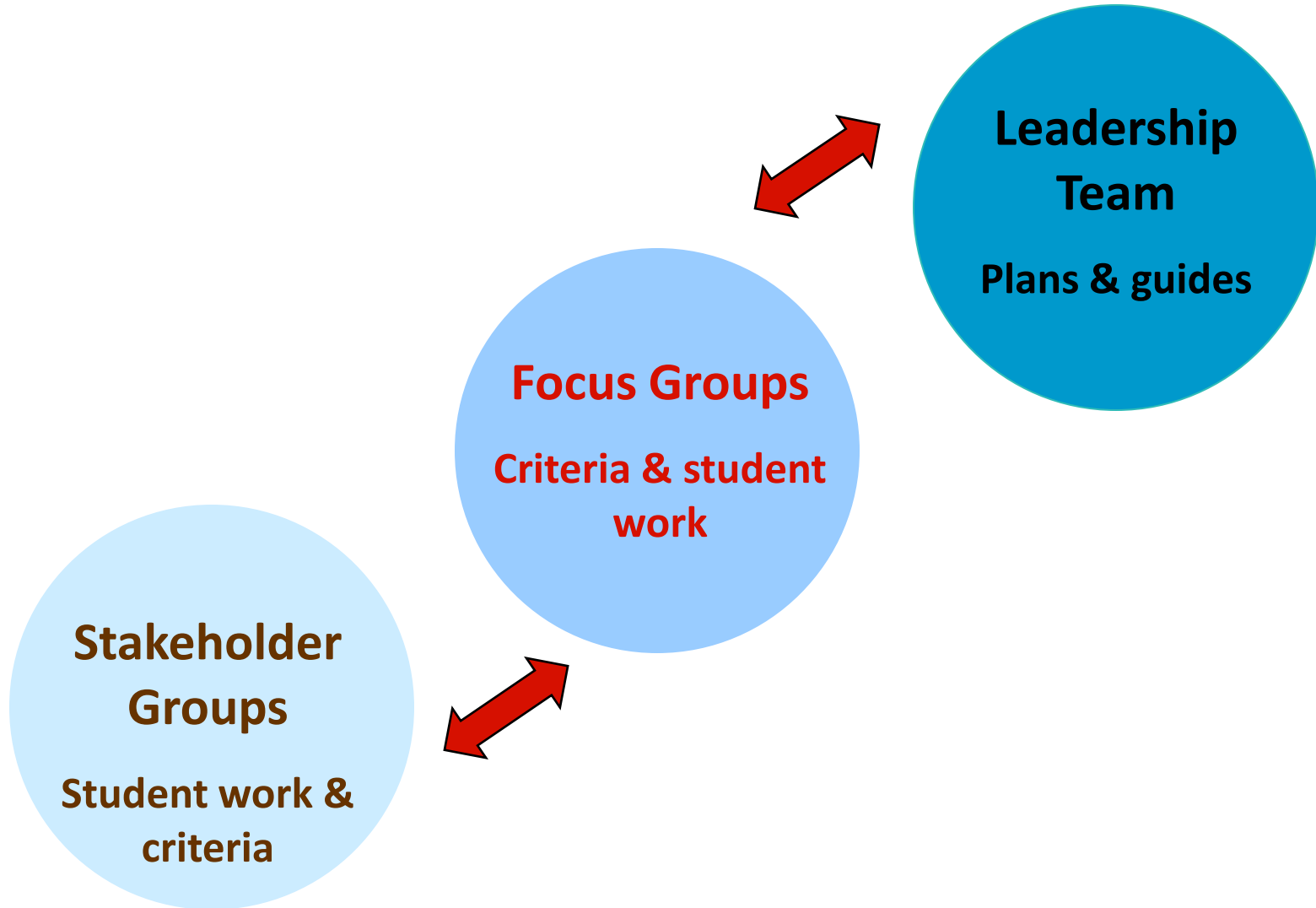
*What should be in the schoolwide action plan?*





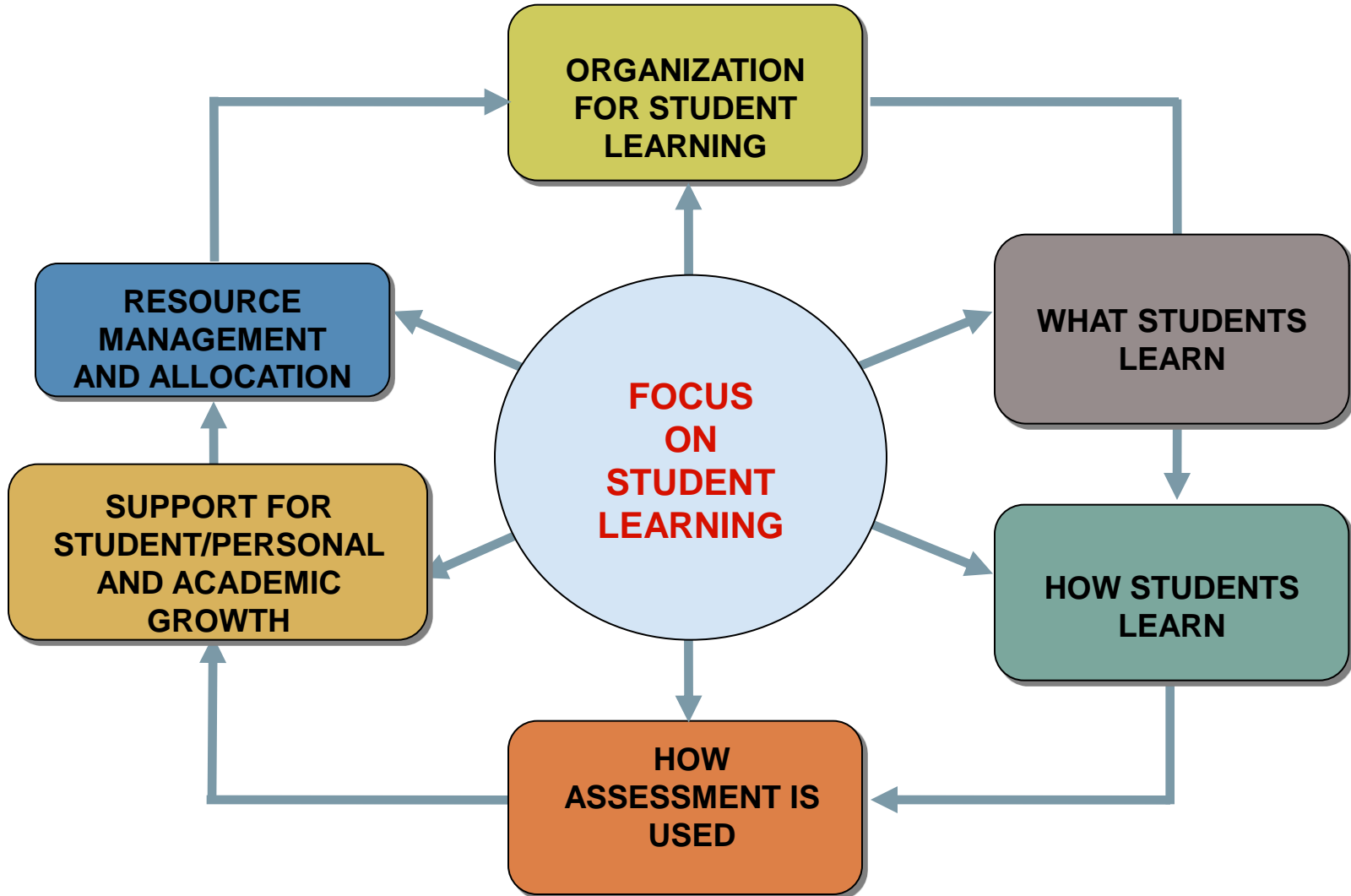


# Self-Study Committees





# WASC Criteria Categories





# Sample WASC Criterion: Instruction— How Students Learn

## Criterion:

To what extent does the professional staff...

- design and implement a variety of learning experiences that actively engage students at a high level of learning consistent with the school's purpose and schoolwide learner outcomes?

## Sample Indicator

- Students working and their work demonstrate critical, creative thinking, problem solving, knowledge attainment, and application skills.

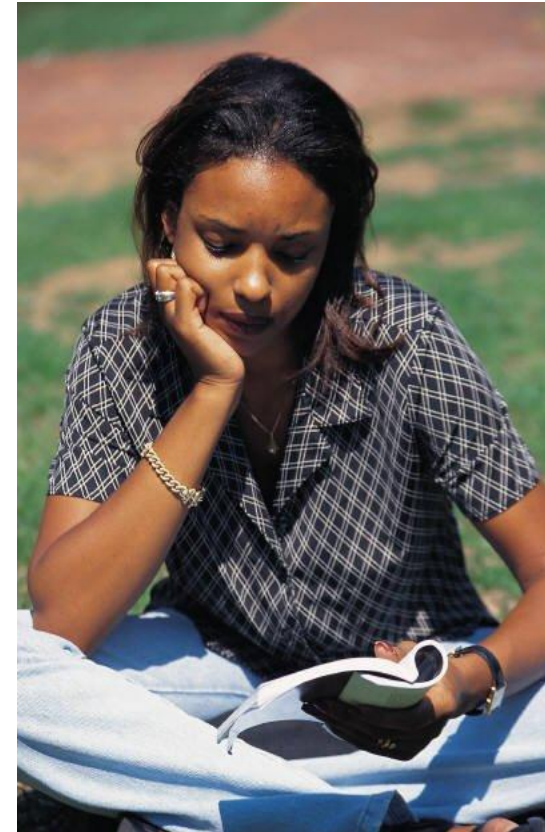




# Sample WASC Criterion: How Assessment Is Used (Excerpt)

To what extent...

Do teachers and students use assessment results to modify the ongoing learning and teaching process?





# Focus Groups use WASC Criteria & Indicators:

<p><b>What are the criteria concepts?</b></p>	<p><b>What evidence is needed for analysis?</b></p>
<p><b>Gathering and Analyzing Data/Information</b></p>	



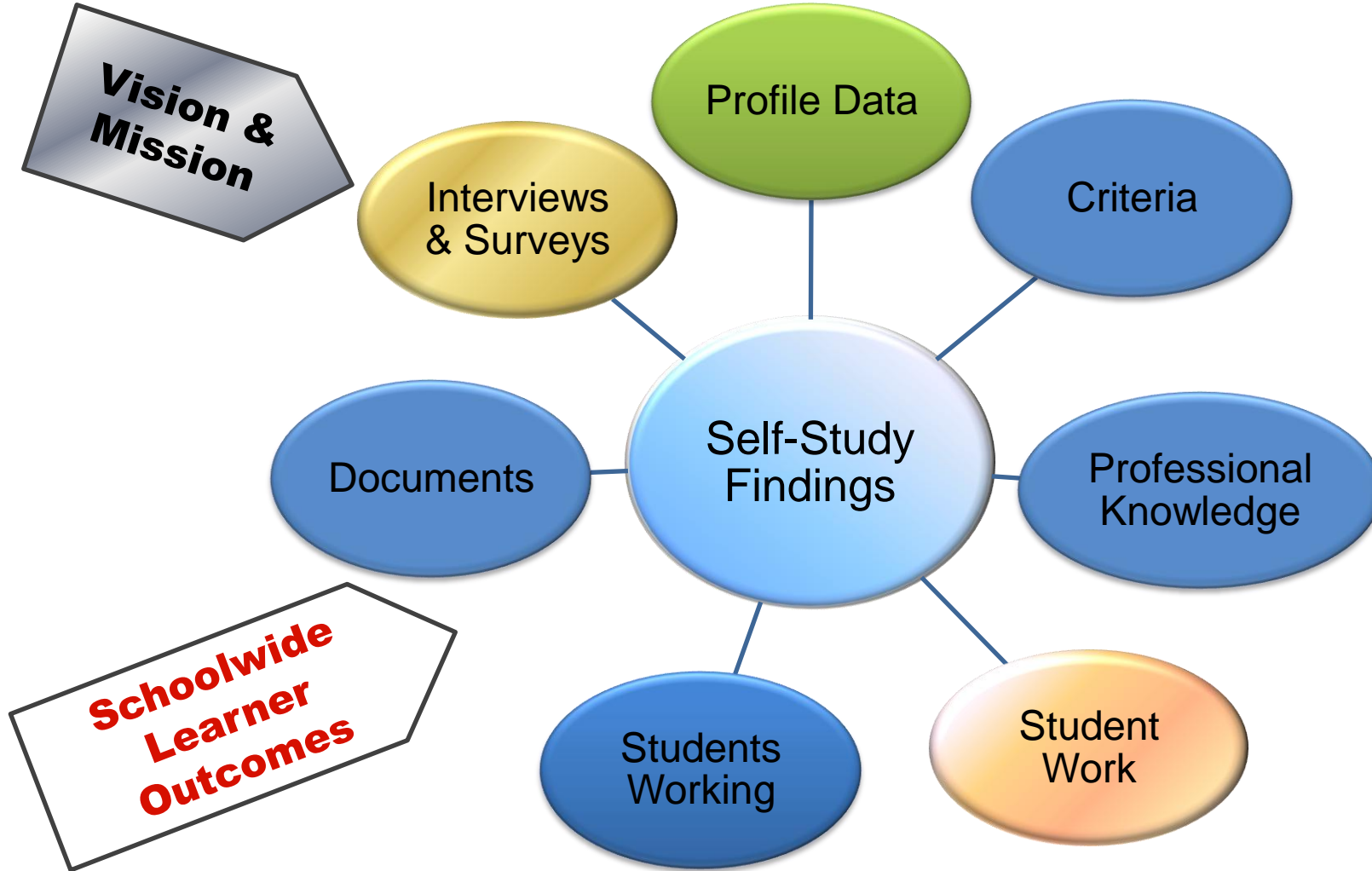


# Types of Data/Evidence for Self-Study





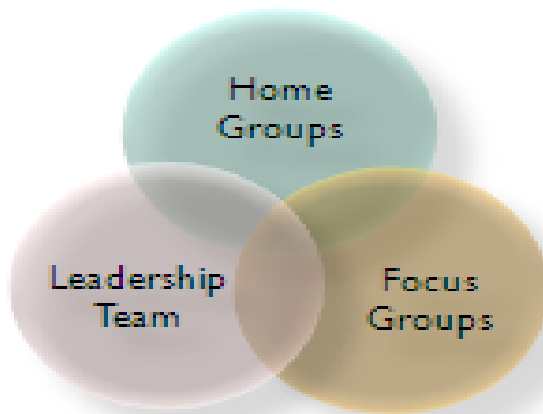
# Self-Study Process: The “So What” Question? What currently exists? How effective?





# Self-Study Process and Product

## Process



Professional knowledge  
Data  
Observations  
Surveys/interviews  
Student work  
Documents

## Product

Response to criteria

Evidence

Strengths

Key areas for follow-up







# Self-Study: Schoolwide Action Plan



# Important School Question about Plan

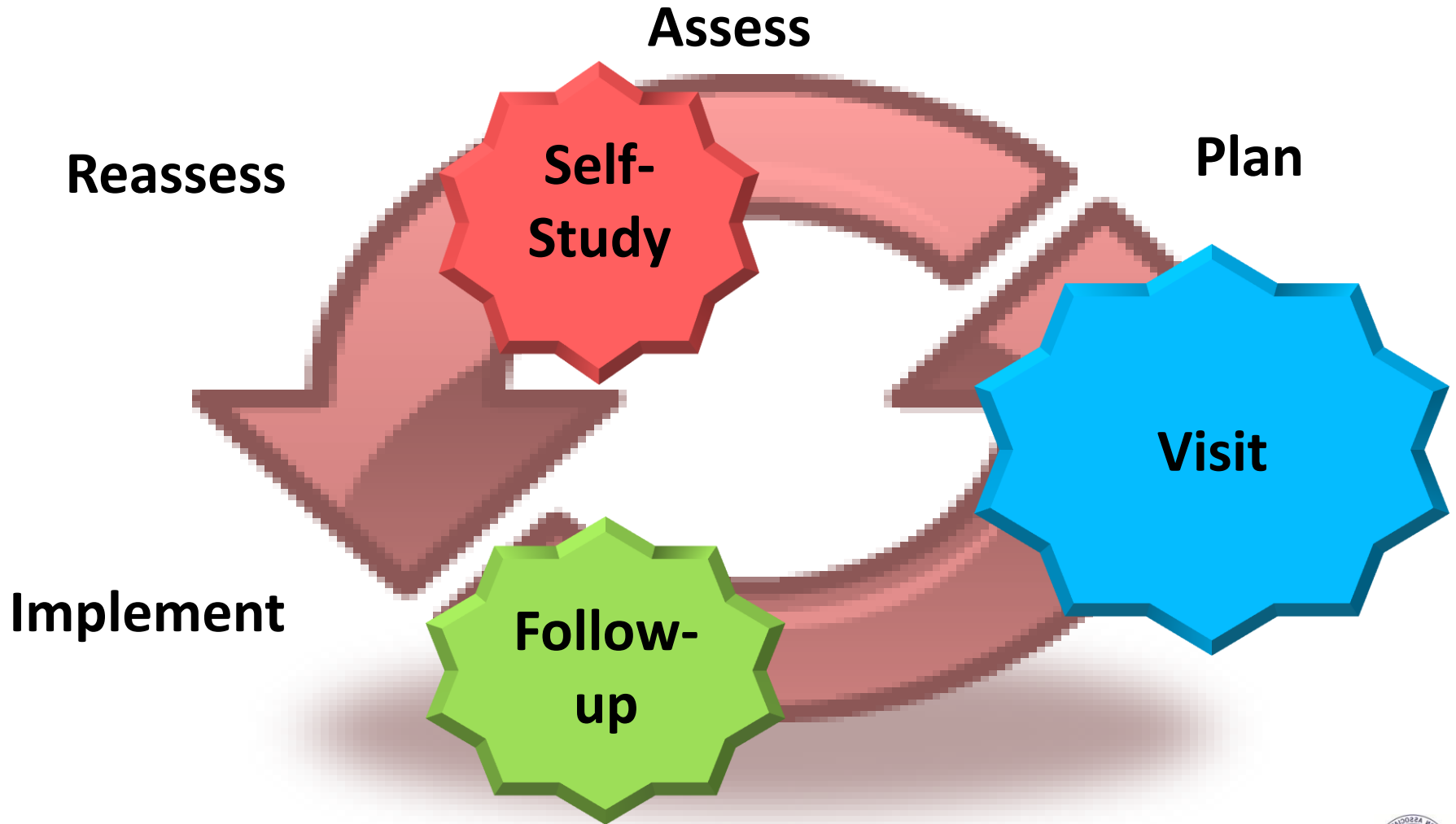


**Through implementing the Plan, what will be different for students as global citizens?**

- One year from now?**
- Two years from now?**
- Three years from now?**



# WASC FOL Accreditation Cycle of Quality





# The Visit: Are Students Achieving as Global Citizens?





# The Visit by Fellow Educators: Purpose

**Based on WASC criteria, school's purpose and schoolwide learner outcomes and self-study, the Visiting Committee (VC)\* ...**

- **Provides insight about student learning and school program**
  - ✓ **Validates school program**
  - ✓ **Celebrates school strengths**
  - ✓ **Provides recommendations on growth areas**

**\* Visiting Committee chair/members: team size based on school size, spends a week at school.**





# The Visit by Fellow Educators: Purpose

- **Prepares a written report for school and Commission**
- **Recommends an accreditation status**
- **Commission takes action**
  - **Six years**
  - **Three years**
  - **Probation:**
  - **Denial or Withheld**





# Accreditation Status Factors: VC Recommendation and Commission Action

- To what extent is the school demonstrating quality student achievement/improvement?
1. Meeting the WASC international criteria and indicators
  2. Clear globally-minded purpose and schoolwide learner outcomes
  3. Quality processes to analyze student achievement
  4. Action plan aligned to areas of greatest need
  5. Capacity to implement/monitor action plan
  6. Total involvement and collaboration
  7. Use of prior accreditation findings

Highly effective

Effective

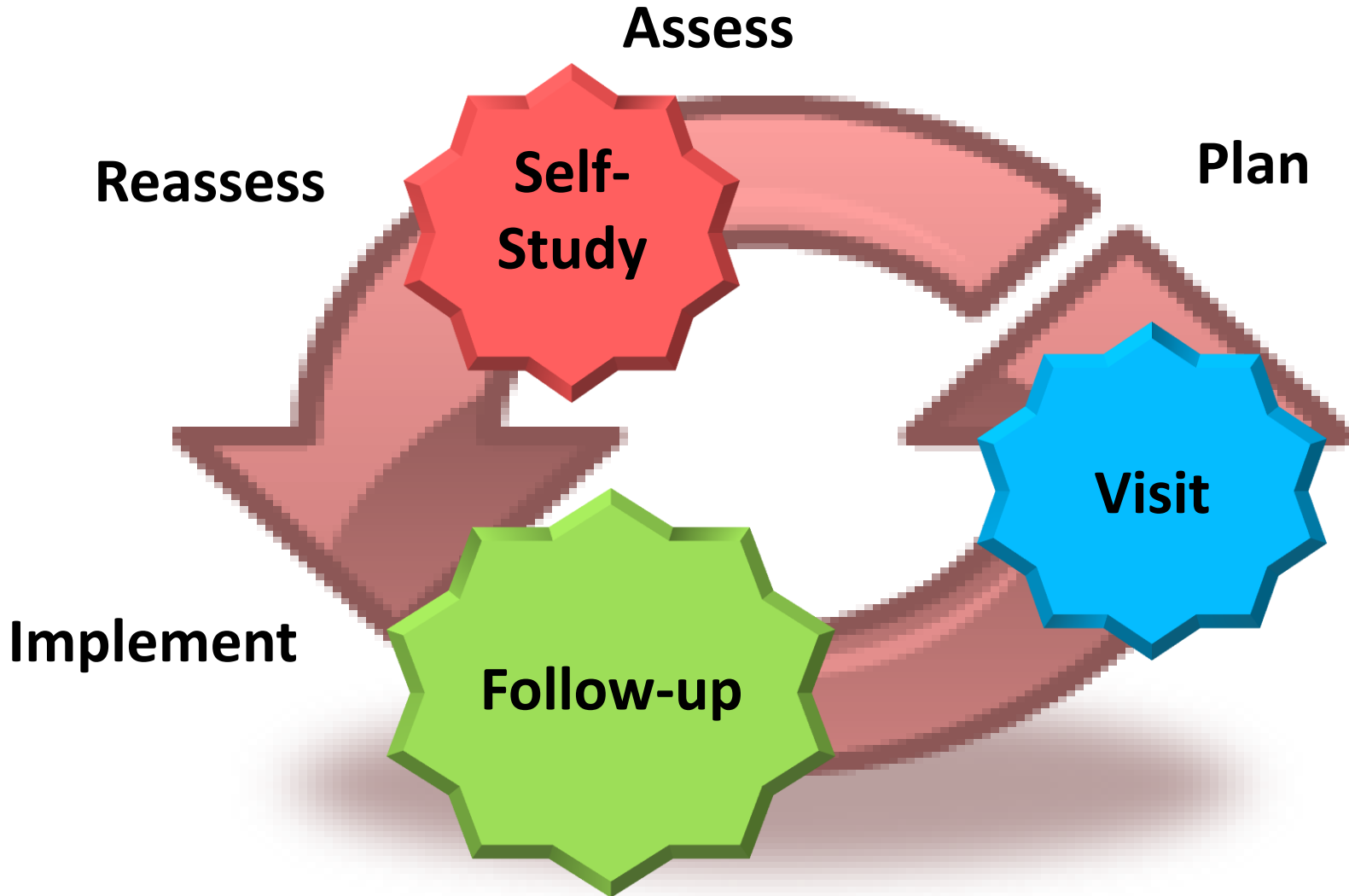
Somewhat effective

Ineffective





# WASC FOL Accreditation Cycle of Quality







# The Follow-Up: After Visit

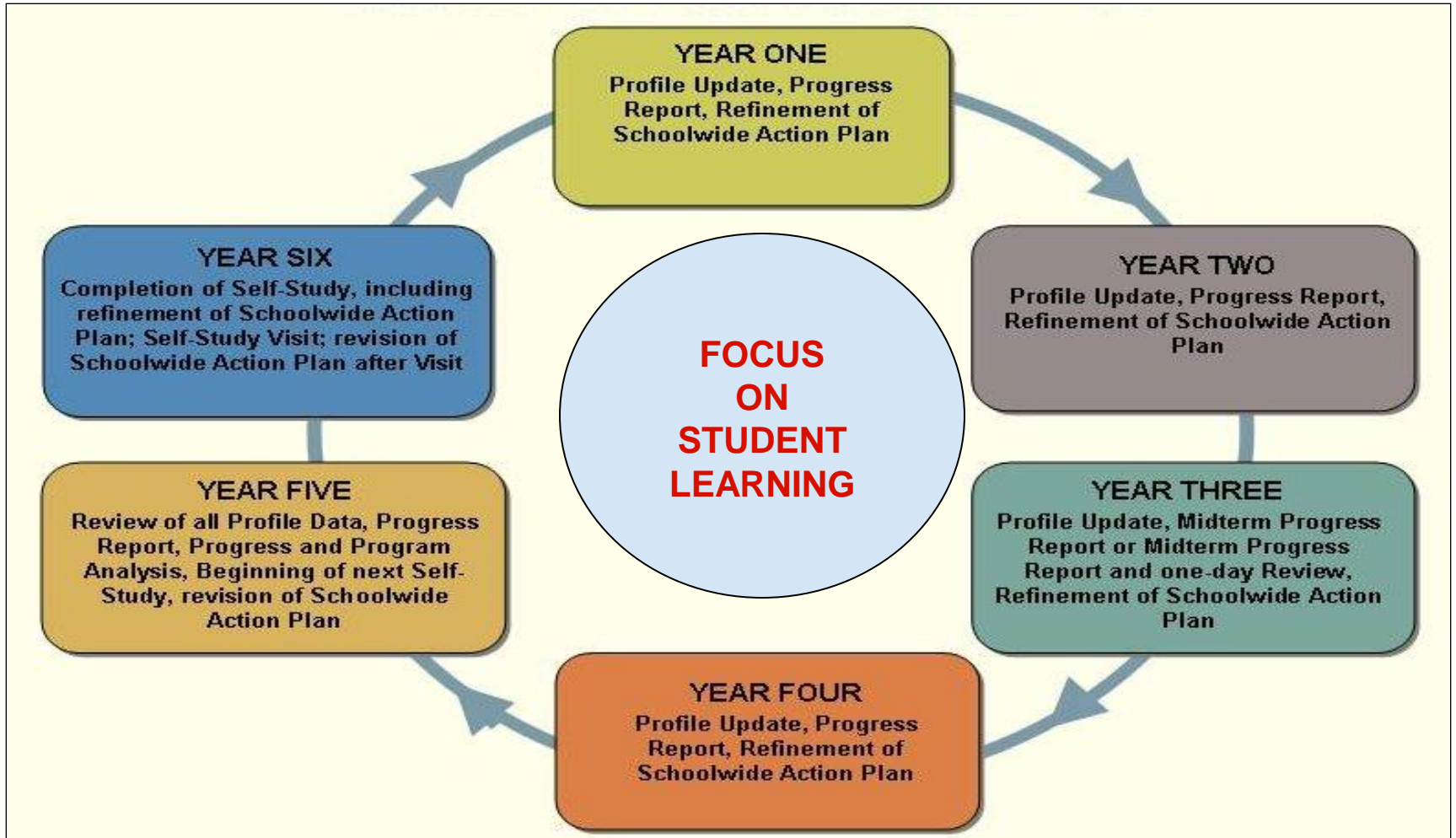
## The School

- **Revises the Schoolwide Action Plan**
  - Includes recommendations from the Visiting Committee
  - Submits Action Plan to WASC
- **Annually reviews progress on Action Plan based on Schoolwide Learner Outcomes — Global Competencies**
- **Revises Action Plan as needed**
- **Submits annual progress report to WASC**
- **Has periodic visit from WASC**





# WASC Accreditation Cycle of Quality (five or six years)





# WASC Focus on Learning: A Powerful Change Process

## Focus on Learning



## Schools (on) Global Competencies



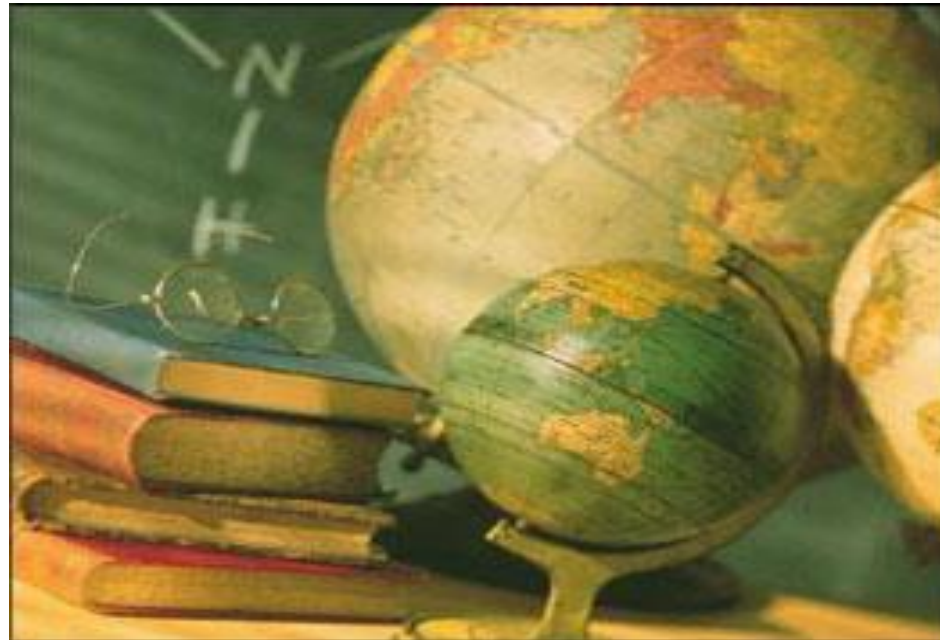


# Focus on Learning: A Powerful Change Process

## The Foundation

**What do students need to know, understand and be able to do to become Global Citizens?**

**Schoolwide Learner Outcomes = Global Competencies**



**W**

**We**

**A**

**Are**

**S**

**Student**

**C**

**Centered**

