



STANDARDS and EVALUATION PROCEDURES

MISSION STATEMENT

COBIS (Council of Bilinguals Schools) is a nonprofit professional organization dedicated to promoting high standards through advocacy, professional development and accreditation. COBIS supports sound business practices to ensure the continued success of its bilingual, accredited schools.

SECTION I - ABOUT COBIS

Conscious of the characteristics pertaining to the origin, language and culture of the majority of their students, a group of ten (10) educators, directors of private bilingual (English/Spanish) educational institutions throughout Miami-Dade County, Florida, united in 1981 to create an organization that would establish and uphold the highest educational standards and values for bilingual schools in Florida. COBIS schools emphasize the need for students to integrate and assimilate into the American culture, with English language proficiency, while maintaining their Hispanic customs and traditions.

COBIS was accepted as a recognized “Accrediting Member” of the FAANS (Florida Association of Academic Non-Public Schools) in October, 1984. Through FAANS, COBIS monitors legislation and disseminates relevant information to its member schools. Ten (10) schools located in Miami-Dade County formed the original members of the Council. In early 2012, COBIS earned reciprocity with both NIPSA (National Independent Private Schools Association) and with AdvanceEd/SACS (Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.) The majority of COBIS schools are also accredited by State, National and/or Regional associations.

COBIS Directors understand that a substantial number of the Hispanic-American youths being educated in this country find solid barriers of communication, speak another language, have different customs and, in spite of the worldly universalities, they constitute a culture within a culture. Effective bilingual programs strive to achieve proficiency in both English and the students' home language. COBIS Directors share the belief that it is important for students to learn English while maintaining their native language.

At many COBIS Schools, a percentage of the students speak English and another percentage are considered ELLs (English Language Learners.) The Teacher may instruct in both English and in the ELLs' home language simultaneously. This language diversity in the classroom is considered a resource. Classes are all taught in English, but the bilingual teachers are readily available to translate to Spanish and to assure that the English language is incorporated without their home language being lost. Spanish is a required subject in all grade levels at all COBIS Accredited schools.

SECTION II - STANDARDS FOR MEMBERSHIP

Just as By-Laws and Standards are used to evaluate a school for initial or continuing membership, both subjective and objective measurements of a school's performance are used during the evaluation process. The success a school is having in carrying out its published philosophy is foremost in the minds of the Evaluation Committee and the Board of Directors as they make their decision about accrediting or re-accrediting a school.

The Standards and Evaluative Criteria stated herein may be modified or revised as needed at any time by a majority vote of the Board of Directors of the Council of Bilingual Schools.

A. MEMBERSHIP/ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

1. Membership in the Council of Bilingual Schools is limited to independent academic schools that are organized as for-profit or not-for-profit Corporations and that have been granted COBIS “accrediting status.” Accreditation is conferred after a school meets a rigorous set of standards and pays all applicable dues.
2. Once a school is accredited, it maintains that status for a seven (7) year period, at which time it must once again present itself for a full evaluation. After five (5) years of being granted the fully accredited status, the accredited school must submit an “Accredited School Interim Report” and be subject to a half-day visit by a Team of three Directors from fully accredited schools.
3. In order for a school to be a fully accredited member of the Council of Bilingual Schools, they must adhere to the following requirements:
 - a. The school must have an established campus that complies with all local, State and Federal laws.
 - b. The school must have a published statement of non-discrimination and may not discriminate in its admissions or hiring policies.
 - c. The school must have completed at least three (3) years of successful operation as an independent school.
 - d. The school must have students enrolled in at least five (5) elementary grades. Each of these grades must have their own individual classroom and designated homeroom teacher. Grade levels cannot be combined for core subjects.
 - e. The school must require the teaching of the Spanish language within the established Curriculum. It must also encourage its faculty and student body to participate in events and activities that help to stimulate Hispanic culture and heritage. In addition, the school’s faculty must be bilingual; speakers of both English and Spanish.
 - f. The school must enroll a minimum of fifty (50) students.
 - g. The school must comply with minimum student attendance requirements of 170 school days.
 - h. The school must make evident that it meets prescribed standards and operates in accordance with the COBIS By-Laws and its Code of Ethics.
 - i. The school must pay the annual dues by the established due date.
 - j. The school must submit the “Annual Report Form”, the “Questionnaire Form for Scholarship Compliance” and any other forms required by NIPSA and/or SACS/AdvancEd.
4. The following educational programs are not eligible for membership in COBIS:
 - a. Schools that are primarily or fully tutorial;
 - b. Schools that are primarily or fully vocational;
 - c. Schools that are primarily or fully virtual;
 - d. Schools that are primarily dedicated to teaching foreign languages;
 - e. Schools that provide adult education to students 21 years and over;
 - f. Home-based schools;
 - g. Charter Schools
5. All promotional literature shall contain accurate information concerning philosophies, objectives, facilities and different aspects of the program.

B. SCHOOLS WITH MULTIPLE CAMPUSES AND CAMPUS EXPANSIONS

1. Schools with more than one Campus:

Schools with more than one campus, with same or similar name and same corporate entity, must apply for accreditation at each individual campus simultaneously. All campuses must follow the same application procedures and adhere to the same COBIS standards. Each campus will be responsible for paying separate

dues accordingly. Schools with more than one campus, but with the same corporate entity, will have only one vote within the COBIS Board of Directors.

2. Additional Campuses of Accredited Schools:

If the owner of existing COBIS accredited school opens an additional campus operating under the same or similar name and with the same corporate entity, they must apply for accreditation at each individual campus. Each additional campus may be accredited under the same original criteria utilized to accredit the main campus, as long as they meet the following criteria:

- a. The new campus must adhere to all COBIS Standards.
- b. The new campus must be located within the same County and within a ten (10) mile radius of the campus that was initially accredited.
- c. The new campus must have the same ownership as the existing accredited school.
- d. The school head must have administrative authority over all the campuses.
- e. A "Self-Study" must be completed with information pertinent to the new campus and all the current required dues must be paid.
- f. The new campus must have the same philosophy, mission statement and academic standards as the existing accredited school.
- g. The website of the existing accredited school must include either all information pertinent to the new campus or a direct link to the website of the new campus.
- h. Students at the new campus must wear same uniform color combinations and utilize the same logos as those at the existing accredited school.
- i. Upon receipt of the "Self-Study" for an additional campus, an Evaluation Committee will be designated to visit the school and verify compliance of all the COBIS standards. The committee will have three (3) months from receipt of the "Self-Study" to visit the new campus.
- j. A new Campus that is not deemed to be in compliance with COBIS Standards may be placed on Probation status. This may jeopardize the accredited member status for the existing accredited school.

3. Campus Expansion:

In order for a COBIS accredited school that wishes to expand to retain their accredited status, the expansion must be:

- a. Within the same property's folio number or;
- b. With a property that is immediately adjacent to the campus already accredited. If campus expansion does not have the same property folio number or is not immediately adjacent to the existing accredited campus, it will be considered a new campus.
- c. The expanded campus must meet all COBIS standards; otherwise, the existing COBIS accredited school may lose its accredited member standing.
- d. The Board of Directors will assess the report of the Evaluation Committee and will determine if the expanded campus can be granted immediate full "accredited status." If the campus expansion is not granted fully accredited status, the main campus may be placed on probation status, Section III. B. 8.
- e. Each individual circumstance not specifically addressed in this section may be resolved by two-thirds vote of the COBIS Board of Directors.

SECTION III – STANDARDS AND EVALUATION PROCEDURES

A. PROCEDURE FOR ACCREDITATION.

With a few exceptions, including the process of obtaining and submitting the "*Original Application*," the process and procedures for schools applying for initial accreditation and those member schools applying for re-accreditation are basically the same. Only the Board of Directors may convey membership to a school.

B. PROCESS FOR NEW SCHOOL APPLICANTS

1. An application for membership in the Council shall be given to a new School Applicant only after the President and a designated **Accreditation Review Team** have completed a preliminary visit to the school and determined that the school may meet or exceed all Standards and Evaluation Procedures stated herein.
2. Once a school feels they can meet all the requirements stipulated herein and therefore decide to continue with the application process, they must do the following:
 - Obtain the endorsement of at least three (3) current accredited members. After these are obtained, the school must request in writing an *"Initial Application"* form, which must include the signature of the three (3) Directors endorsing the Applicant school.
 - Submit these forms together with the required **\$750.00** Application Fee. This fee is non-refundable and does not guarantee accreditation.
3. After the completed Application is submitted together with the Application Fee, the School Applicant should begin its "Self-Study" process; (the Self-Study template is available on the COBIS website.)
4. The new School Applicant will then have a minimum time period of six (6) months and up to one (1) year from the date the application was submitted, to prepare and submit its "Self-Study."
5. If the "Self-Study" is not received within this time, the school's Application will become null and void. A new *"Original Application"* would then have to be submitted.
6. After receiving the school's Self-Study, a minimum time of six (6) months must elapse before a School Applicant can be scheduled for a visit by an **Accreditation Review Team**.
7. Once the President is advised that the school is ready for a site visit, he/she will schedule a date for the **Accreditation Review Team** to visit the school.
8. All required documentation must be completed and e-mailed to the **Accreditation Review Team** at least two (2) weeks before the date of the scheduled visit.
9. After the initial visit is complete, if there are "recommendations" provided, but no "violations," the school will be granted *"Provisional Member"* status for one (1) year, effective as of the date school was formally notified in writing. If "violations" are observed, the school will be given six (6) months to make the necessary corrections.
10. If the School Applicant does not notify the President within this timeframe, the process for accreditation will be terminated. The Applicant School would then need to commence a new process and pay the \$750.00 Application Fee again.
11. It is the responsibility of each School Applicant to notify the President, via email, once all violations have been corrected.
12. Two (2) members of the **Accreditation Review Team** will then re-visit the school for verification of compliance. After this visit is completed, the President will prepare and submit a *"Final Report."*
13. Within two (2) months after the Evaluation Committee visits the school applying for accreditation, the President will prepare and mail a *"Final Report"* indicating all commendations, recommendations and/or violations observed. This form will be e-mailed to the School Head with copy to each Evaluation Committee member.
14. With a majority vote, COBIS Directors have the right to deny accreditation at any time to a school that does not meet all published standards or that fails to abide by its Code of Ethics. The decision of the Board is final and the Board Members will not be held liable for their decision, whether collectively or individually.
15. If the COBIS Board of Directors determines that a new school Applicant has the same or very similar name to that of an existing member, the Board must notify the Applicant and the Application for Membership may be denied.

C. PROCESS FOR ACCREDITED MEMBER SCHOOLS

1. FULL RE-ACCREDITATION REVIEW

- a. Every seven (7) years, all accredited member schools will be subject to a **"Full Re-Accreditation Review"** process. This process includes a full day site visit by a designated **Accreditation Review Team** consisting of five (5) Directors from fully accredited member schools.

- b. An accredited school must begin working on its “Self-Study” at least one (1) year before the school is up for re-accreditation.
- c. The “Self-Study” must be submitted via e-mail to each member of the **Accreditation Review Team** at least two (2) weeks prior to the scheduled date of the visit.
- d. The **Accreditation Review Team** shall include the President of the Council and a minimum of four (4) additional members, including a representative from NIPSA/AdvancEd in cases of joint accreditation.
- e. The President of the Council will be responsible for communicating with the Head of the School and for coordinating the dates of each visit.
- f. The length of the visit will be determined by the President, taking into consideration the scope of the school's program, the size of the faculty and student body, and any special factors, such as multiple campuses. Most schools will require a minimum of one full day of an on-campus evaluation.
- g. The school must print one hard copy and have it available for the **Accreditation Review Team** on the day of the visit.
- h. Within two (2) months after the Team completes the visit to the school applying for re-accreditation, the President will prepare and e-mail the School Head and all members of the Team a “**Full Accreditation Review Report**” indicating all commendations, recommendations and/or violations observed.
- i. If there are “recommendations” but no violations, the school will be re-accredited. The school will then have three (3) months to respond to all recommendations via email.
- j. If there are “violations”, the school shall be placed on “*Probation*” status. It will then have six (6) months to satisfy all violations or lose their accreditation status.
- k. It is the responsibility of each member school to notify the President, in writing, once all violations have been corrected.
- l. Two (2) members of the **Accreditation Review Team** will then re-visit the school for verification of compliance. After this visit is completed, the Team will prepare and submit a “*Final Report*” giving their recommendations to the Board. The School will then be either granted a “*Provisional Member*” status for one year, effective as of the date school was formally notified, or be denied accreditation.
- m. If a member school is denied accreditation, the School Head shall be informed via e-mail the reason(s) for the denial. The school must then immediately cease to identify COBIS as their accrediting agency on their website and/or other publications.
- n. With a majority vote, the COBIS Board of Directors have the right to deny accreditation to any school that does not meet all of the published standards or that fails to abide by its code of ethics, at any time. The decision of the Board is final and the Board will not be held liable for their decision, whether collectively or individually.
- o. Once an accredited school has been formally denied membership, a period of two full (2) calendar years must elapse before they may reapply. Once they re-apply, they will be considered a “*New School Applicant*” and the latest available published standards will be applicable.
- p. In cases of joint accreditation through NIPSA or AdvancEd, an additional Evaluation Committee Member may be sent to represent those organizations and perform the evaluation on behalf of those agencies accordingly.
- q. Only schools that are up-to-date on their dues will be scheduled for a visit; (*See By-Laws, Art. III, Sec. 2 with regard to members that are past due on their annual dues.*)
- r. The school will be responsible for absorbing the costs of all meals and other related expenses.

2. INTERIM STANDARDS REVIEW

- a. During the month of October of the fifth (5th) year after a school was granted fully accredited status, the accredited school must complete and submit the “**ACCREDITED SCHOOL INTERIM AGREEMENT**” via email to the COBIS Board of Directors.
- b. Prior to March 1st of that year, an **Interim Report Visiting Team** consisting of **three (3) Directors** from fully accredited member schools, will perform a **half-day visit** to the school to verify the school is in compliance with all COBIS Standards and Evaluation Procedures.

- c. After the visit, the Chair of the Team will have thirty (30) days to prepare and submit the “**ACCREDITED SCHOOL INTERIM REPORT**” with the result of their findings. This Report will include any applicable recommendations and/or violations based on the Team’s observations.
- d. The school will then have three (3) months to address any recommendations via email. A subsequent visit by one or two Team members may be scheduled to confirm that recommendations have been addressed.
- e. If the Team observes any **violations**, the protocol will be the same as if the school were undergoing a full accreditation review; (per III. C.1)
- f. Schools with joint NIPSA and/or SACS/AdvancEd accreditation must maintain all Standards of those organizations at all times and will be subject to any visits, inspections or evaluations by those organizations.

3. CAUSES FOR TERMINATING ACCREDITATION STATUS

- a. If the Board of Directors receives an adverse report about an Accredited Member School, the Board may require a visit or a full Review; to investigate the complaint.
- b. After the investigation is completed, the Board of Directors has the right to determine whether accreditation should be continued or terminated. Advance notice for such an inspection visit shall not be required. Decisions by the Board are final.
- c. Notification of termination of accreditation must be done via email directly to the Principal/Owner or Head of School.
- d. Accredited schools must submit to the President an “**Annual Report Form**,” together with the Annual dues, by **October 31st** of each year, or the school may forfeit their accredited status. These forms will be emailed to all Members in the fall of each year.
- e. Schools that do not submit their **Annual Dues** by October 31st of each year will forfeit their accredited status.
- f. Schools that do not email their “Self-Study” within the specified time frame, may forfeit their accredited status.
- g. Either the School Head, or a designated representative, must attend both COBIS meetings each year or the School’s accreditation status may be terminated.

D. APPLICANTS OUTSIDE MIAMI-DADE COUNTY

- 1. COBIS may accept applications from schools located in Miami-Dade, Broward, Palm Beach and Monroe Counties.
- 2. School applicants located outside of Miami-Dade County shall be responsible for all expenses incurred by the members of the Evaluation Committee. This includes, but is not limited to, travel expenses, lodging and food and car/gas mileage. These expenses shall be in addition to all required fees.

E. ON-CAMPUS VISIT REQUIREMENTS DURING EVALUATIONS

- 1. A secluded and comfortable room should be made available for the Evaluation Committee where they may freely meet and confer. This room should have a conference table. A computer, iPad or laptop should also be provided.
- 2. The following documents must be available, in an organized manner:
 - a. A Map of the School Campus.
 - b. Daily individual class schedules, specifying room numbers.
 - c. Detailed inventory of all textbooks, (these must include book title, publisher and copyright date of each book utilized by students). This inventory can be in print or in digital format.
 - d. Published curriculum for each grade level in a detailed and organized format. The curriculum can be in print or in digital format.
 - e. Copies of all published school brochures, handbooks, yearbooks, promotional material and/or any school publication.
 - f. Copies of all extra-curricular schedules and description of each program offered.

- g. Copies of all Student and Faculty Handbooks.
- h. Computerized student roster for each grade level.
- i. Copies of newsletters to faculty and/or parents.
- j. Written evidence of faculty meeting agendas.
- k. Sample of reports/forms utilized (report cards, evaluations, accident/incident reports, interim reports, conduct referrals, etc.).
- l. Each individual teacher must have readily available, on top of their desks in hard copy or digital format, their detailed daily lesson plan for each subject, their curriculum guidelines and their attendance books.
- m. Each school must have a centralized "fire-proof" file cabinet containing the following:
 - i. Individual files for each employee (administration, faculty and staff). These must contain an application for employment, personal resume, recommendation letters, criminal background check results, health certificates, copies of degrees and college transcripts, annual continuing education certificates, First-Aid/CPR Certificates and food service certificate (if applicable), any pertinent awards, etc.
 - ii. Individual files for each student. These must be organized by grade in alphabetical order. These files must contain birth certificates, updated registration forms with disclaimers, past transcripts, standardized test scores, immunization records and health certificates, and all cumulative records available, including copies of progress reports and any pertinent psychological reports.
 - iii. All student grades, school records and financial records must be saved on a computer's hard drive and in an external hard drive stored outside the school campus and/or in an external data storage system or cloud. All administrative information must be backed up a minimum of once per week and this must be kept in a locked safe outside of the school campus.

SECTION IV - GENERAL STANDARDS

A. PHILOSOPHY AND OBJECTIVES

1. The school must have a written philosophy by which the school's entire program is developed and maintained. All members of the school community, including faculty, staff, students, parents, etc., shall be made aware of this philosophy.
2. There must be written objectives which summarize the school's educational program.
3. Regular faculty meetings must be held to cooperatively plan a program to meet the objectives of the school. A written agenda must be documented for each faculty meeting.
4. The professional staff must evaluate the progress of the school in attaining its objectives.
5. The school must provide evidence of having a thoughtful process, respectful of its mission, for the collection and use of student data in school decision-making.
6. Administrative policies should be issued to faculty and staff in written form.
7. There will be written observations/evaluations of teachers to see that they comply with the instructional program.
8. There shall be evidence of professional growth and improvement of staff members through formal and informal programs of study.

B. NON-DISCRIMINATORY POLICIES

All member schools must publish a written statement indicating they do not discriminate in admission or employment on the basis of race, sex, religion, national or ethnic origin. It must also indicate that it follows the laws of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and therefore cannot discriminate on the basis of any disability.

C. SCHOOL LEADERSHIP/ADMINISTRATION

1. The school's Administration shall have the autonomy to meet goals for achievement and instruction and to manage day-to-day operations effectively.

2. The school must maintain an up-to-date Website. Website must include non-discriminatory policies, mission statement, philosophy and objectives, school programs, calendar, extra-curricular offerings, etc. Website must provide ample information to the community about the school.
3. The school's Administration shall have a School Improvement Plan available. The SIP must include specifics future goals, action plans, resources involved (including personnel), action plans and time lines.
4. The school's Administration shall establish policies and support practices that ensure effective administration of the school. These shall foster a culture consistent with the school's purpose and direction.
5. The school's Administration shall actively and consistently support and encourage innovations, collaboration, shared leadership and rigorous professional growth.
6. Leadership and Staff shall commit to shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning supporting challenging educational programs and learning experience including achievement of learning, thinking and life skills.
7. Supervision and evaluation processes of Faculty and Staff are consistently and regularly implemented by the school's Administration. The primary focus of this process is improving professional practice and ensuring student success. The results are analyzed carefully and used to monitor and effectively adjust professional practices.
8. The school's Administration shall provide mentoring, coaching to support and induction programs consistent with the school's values and beliefs about teaching and learning.
9. The school's Administration must monitor and communicate comprehensive information about student learning, conditions that support student learning, and the achievement of school improvement goals.
10. Annual DIRECTORS AND ADMINISTRATORS SURVEY for COBIS Accredited Schools will be made available to all Administrators. Results of these Surveys will be evaluated and included in the school's ACTION PLAN.

D. ADMINISTRATION, FACULTY AND STAFF QUALIFICATION AND REQUIREMENTS

2. The Director or Principal must be at least 25 years old and must have a minimum of a Bachelor's Degree and at least five (5) years of successful administrative experience in the United States. In addition, all COBIS directors must have completed required coursework and have been granted the DCF required Director's Credential Certificate.
3. The Teacher of the two (2) to four (4) year old children shall comply with any one of the following:
 - a. A two (2) year Associate of Arts Degree (AA) plus a minimum of twelve (12) hours of continuing Education Courses each year in Child Care/Early Childhood Education.
 - b. At least three (3) years of continuous teaching experience in Early Childhood Education, plus a minimum of twelve (12) hours of continuing Education Courses each year in Child Care/Early Childhood Education.
 - c. In addition, both lead teachers and teacher's assistants must have completed the Dept. of Children & Families' 40-Hour Child Care training course. This course includes: 20 hour "Introductory Child Care Training Course," 10 hours of "Behavioral Observation and Screening Course." and 10 hours of "Specialized Training" in either Developmentally Appropriate Practices for Infant & Toddlers, Young Children, Elementary-Age Children, or Special Needs Children.
4. The Teacher of the five-year old Kindergarten through the 12th Grade must have at least a Bachelor's Degree from an accredited institution and preferably several years of teaching experience, in addition to participating in continuing education courses.
5. All Teachers in Middle and Secondary schools must teach in-field and participate in ongoing yearly continuing education courses. Teachers of students with exceptionalities must have a minimum of a Bachelor's Degree in Exceptional Student Education and preferably, have a Florida Teaching Certificate in ESE.
6. Per FS 1002.421, all private school employees and personnel with direct student contact must undergo a State and National Background Screening by filing a complete set of fingerprints with the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE.) Level II Fingerprints must be submitted electronically.
7. Child care level employees must comply with all requirements and screenings set forth by the State of Florida's Department of Children and Family Services (DCF).

8. Cafeteria personnel must pass the Food Handler or Food Manager On-Line Course and have their Certificates on file at all times.
9. All Employees must have on file a completed Form I-9, Employee Eligibility Verification Form.
10. All Employees who work directly with children must be eighteen (18) years of age or older. Summer camp employees or part-time after-school personnel may be sixteen (16) years of age or older.
11. All Instructional personnel and school administrators in a position that requires direct contact with students are required to read and acknowledge with their signature the new screening standards, per SB 1712, Ethics in Education Act.
12. The teaching faculty and administrative staff shall be of sufficient number that their work may be distributed to implement the full program of the school satisfactorily. Attention shall be given to the appropriateness of class size and teacher-student ratio insofar as they relate to acceptable teaching conditions, method and student loads. Provision should be made for the needs and interests of individual students consistent with the school's philosophy.
13. Instructional staff members shall spend the major part of the day teaching in the field(s) in which they are academically prepared.
2. Teachers must personalize instructional strategies and interventions to address individual learning needs of each student. They must use instructional strategies that require students to apply knowledge and skills, integrate content with other disciplines and use technologies as instructional resources and learning tools.
3. Teachers must participate in collaborative learning meetings to share information that can be beneficial to improve instruction and student learning. Agendas and Minutes of these meetings should be made available.
4. The overall faculty should be sufficiently versatile in background, age and aptitudes to provide the school with the type of leadership and understanding needed to evoke the best from all of its students.
5. Faculty Members must participate in continuous education programs in order to enhance professional learning.
6. All Faculty Members are expected to participate in the annual FACULTY SURVEY for COBIS Accredited Schools. Results of these Surveys will be evaluated and included in the school's ACTION PLAN.

E. ADMISSIONS

Each school must publish their own "Admissions Policy" for all grade levels. These must include clearly defined policies.

F. PROGRAMS AND CURRICULUM

1. Programs:

- a. All programs should provide experiences for growth in social development, Language Arts, Math, Science, Social Studies, Health, Spanish, Music, Fine Arts and Physical Development, Character Education should also be included in the Curriculum.
- b. Although COBIS schools are not required to conduct their classes in both Spanish and English, all teachers should speak both languages and oral Spanish should be encouraged continuously. Spanish courses, (including literature, grammar and composition), are required for grades K thru 8, and must be available thru grade 12.

2. Curriculum:

- a. The school shall have a curriculum consistent with its philosophy and objectives. It should be designed to effectively fulfill the needs of the students enrolled. It must provide equitable and challenging learning experiences that ensure all students have sufficient opportunities to develop learning, thinking, and life skills that lead to success at the next grade level.
- b. Teachers must have the school's Curriculum readily available.
- c. The Council requires evidence of the school's continuing study and updating of the School's published Curriculum.

3. Lesson Plans:

- a. All Teachers are required to prepare and have readily available a detailed Weekly Lesson Plan for each subject.

b. Lesson plans must include Objectives, Procedures, Materials and Evaluation. Objectives must be clearly defined and must include "Bloom's Taxonomy" language.

F. SPECIAL EDUCATION SCHOOLS

1. Accreditation may be granted to schools that describe themselves ONLY as therapeutic or clinical in nature and that have programs, curriculum and facilities specifically designed to meet the needs of students with learning differences or special needs.
2. These schools must be governed by the **National Independent Private Schools Association (NIPSA)** www.nipsa.org. *Part I Evaluative Criteria for School Therapeutic Certification* in addition to the **COBIS Standards and Evaluation Procedures** described herein.
3. The school's mission must include preparing students to develop critical life skills and self-advocacy skills for transitioning to adulthood.
4. The program's Philosophy, Mission Statement and learning environment for this student population must be specific and must describe how the school will serve their exceptional student needs.
5. Sufficient therapeutic, age-appropriate indoor and outdoor manipulatives, didactic materials and therapeutic play equipment, including equipment for occupational and/or physical therapy if needed, must be readily available to the students.
6. Teachers of students with special needs must have all necessary credentials, including a minimum of a Bachelor's Degree with Florida Certification in Exceptional Student Education (ESE) and continuing education courses in Exceptional Student Education and child safety and restraint training.
7. Criteria utilized must be designed to set high standards of performance in regards to all areas of the school.
8. The school's Program must provide a substantially different individualized curriculum and instructional strategies from those of a school offering education to the typical student population.
9. A detailed description of the methods and procedures utilized must be readily available. These must be specific enough so that the program can be judged for its quality, application, educational techniques and student progress.
10. Teachers must meet on a regular basis with Parents and student's progress and achievements must be clearly documented in the form of an Individual Education Plan (IEP) or other similar planning tool. The IEP is a written plan/program developed by the schools special education team with input from the Parents. It specifies the students' academic goals and the methods utilized to obtain these goals. The plan also identifies transition arrangements.
11. Substitute Teachers must have appropriate credentials and experience working with exceptional education students and must be trained in child safety and restraint. Substitute Teachers files must be readily available. File must include Information on each student's specific needs, including allergies and/or any dietary restrictions.
12. The school must offer on-site therapies, including speech and language pragmatics, occupational therapy, etc.
13. Sub-contracted Therapists that provide services to the students must provide credentials, including in-field college Degrees and Licenses. These must be maintained on file at all times.
14. Student's academic and medical records are maintained confidential. FIRPA laws must be abided by.

H. SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS WITHIN AN ACCREDITED SCHOOL

1. COBIS accredited schools may establish Special Education programs to meet the needs of various types of exceptional student education. In addition to the above:
2. Schools offering Special Education programs within a regular-school setting (inclusion) must provide a substantially different individualized curriculum and instructional strategies from those of the typical student population.
3. The program's mission must include preparing students to develop critical life skills and self-advocacy skills for transitioning to adulthood.
4. The program's Philosophy, Mission Statement and learning environment for this student population must be specific and must describe how the school will serve their exceptional student needs.
5. Sufficient therapeutic, age-appropriate indoor and outdoor manipulatives, didactic materials and therapeutic

- play equipment, including occupational therapy equipment if needed, must be readily available to the students.
6. Teachers of self-contained ESE classes must have all necessary credentials, as defined in G. 6. Above.
 7. Teachers of ESE students in an inclusion class must have all necessary credentials, including a minimum of a Bachelor's Degree with continuing education courses in Exceptional Student Education and sufficient coursework and continuing education courses in Exceptional Student Education.
 8. A detailed description of the methods and procedures utilized must be readily available. These must be specific enough so that the program can be judged for its quality, application, educational techniques and student progress.
 9. Teachers must meet on a regular basis with Parents and student's progress and achievements must be clearly documented in the form of an Individual Education Plan (IEP) or other similar planning tool. (The IEP is a written plan/program developed by the school's special education team with input from the Parents. It specifies the students' academic goals and the methods utilized to obtain these goals. The plan also identifies transition arrangements.)
 10. Substitute Teachers must have appropriate credentials and experience working with exceptional education students and must be trained in child safety and restraint. Substitute Teachers files must be readily available. File must include Information on each student's specific needs, including allergies and/or any dietary restrictions.
 12. The school must offer on-site therapies, including speech and language pragmatics, occupational therapy, etc.
 13. Sub-contracted Therapists that provide services to the Students must provide credentials, including in-field College Degrees and Licenses. These must be maintained on file at all times.
 14. Student's academic and medical records are maintained confidential. FIRPA laws must be abided by.

I. PARENT COMMUNICATION

1. Communication between home and school is essential to all COBIS schools.
2. Convenient times must be scheduled for a minimum of two (2) annual Parent-Teacher Conferences per school year.
3. The school shall engage families in meaningful ways in their children's education and shall keep them informed of their children's learning progress through various sources including web portals, online communications, newsletters, Parent-Teacher conferences, Open Houses, Progress Reporting, etc.
4. Annual PARENT SURVEYS for COBIS Accredited Schools will be made available to all Parents. Results of these Surveys will be evaluated and included in the school's ACTION PLAN.

J. SCHOOL SESSIONS/CALENDAR

1. The school day and school year shall be carefully planned to include the Academic Class
2. Schedule, laboratory periods (when applicable), study periods, assemblies, periods of recreation/Physical Education, nap time and periods for non-academic activities.
3. A written schedule of Daily Activities and a written School Calendar must be provided.
4. Extra-Curricular activities must be planned and a written schedule must be provided indicating days and times of each activity.
5. The school year must conform in length to that required by the Florida Compulsory Attendance Law, as directed by the State Board of Directors of Education for private schools.
6. There shall be a minimum of 170 actual days for each school year. A minimum of net instructional hours is required for each grade category, as follows:
 - Pre-Kindergarten (VPK): 540 hours
 - Kindergarten: 720 hours
 - Grades 1-12: 900 hours

(These class hours do not include passing time, lunch, naptime, transition times, recess or extra-curricular classes.)

K. RECORDS/TRANSFER

1. At least one set of records and permanent files for each student must be maintained safely in a **fire-resistant** file cabinet. These must contain the cumulative records of attendance, health and academic progress of each student.
2. Student academic records must be computerized and backed up on a daily basis on an external hard drive. This drive must be safely stored outside the school campus and/or on a cloud system.
3. Progress Reports/Evaluations must be sent to parents at regular intervals. These must include academic grade and comments on conduct and effort.
4. The student's cumulative folders shall contain permanent and current records showing each child's name, address, parent's name and employment information, pertinent phone numbers, persons authorized to pick-up Child, health information, physical examinations, evidence of State required Immunizations, all cumulative grades and Standardized test results, etc.
5. Schools should gather continuing data on former students as evidence of the school's effectiveness in reaching its objectives.
6. Schools that cease to operate must comply with the Florida Law, which requires its permanent student records to be turned over to either the County School District, the Fla. Dept. of Education or the Council of Bilingual Schools' main office.

L. BUSINESS AND FINANCE

1. Financial Resources/Stability:
The financial resources and management of the school shall be such as to sustain an approved educational program consistent with the school's philosophy and objectives. Evidence of financial stability in the form of an audited financial statement and/or other relevant data must be available. The School must also have a printed Annual budget. The budget must include fiscal resources to fund all positions necessary to achieve the purpose and direction of the School. These documents must be provided to the Chairperson of the Visiting Committee.
2. Insurance:
All personnel shall be covered by both Workmen's Compensation and Liability Insurance. Liability insurance must provide a minimum coverage of \$3,000,000 per occurrence. In cases of Proprietary schools, owners of properties must also obtain an additional Liability coverage with a minimum of \$2,000,000. The school's Workmen's Compensation policy should be available to and understood by all Employees. Those schools that do not meet this requirement must give evidence from an Insurance carrier in writing of inability to obtain or just cause for not complying. An "errors and omissions" policy is highly recommended to all schools.
3. Non-Profit Corporations:
If the school is non-profit, the school should follow fund-raising procedures appropriate to its needs, which include capital gift campaigns, annual fund drives and deferred gift efforts. The school's Alumni should show a reasonable degree of support for such fund-raising efforts.
4. Parent-Teacher Organizations:
The school may have a separate fund-raising entity which should be incorporated. Detailed accounting must be maintained of all income and expenses raised by any Parent organization. Financial Reports must be published and distributed to members at least once per year. All funds raised by these organizations must be deposited in a separate checking account and taxes must be filed according to the law.

M. STUDENT DISCIPLINE AND MORALE

1. The school shall have a well-defined published student "Behavior Policies" or "Disciplinary Policies" with clearly defined procedures that are appropriate for each of the different age groups or grade levels. This must be clearly written and distributed to students, parents and faculty. There must be evidence that this policy is understood and is effectively in operation.

2. There is to be evidence of self-discipline, care, and concern for fellow students. There should be evidence of a non-threatening atmosphere where children are free to grow and develop.
3. An effort should be made to build on children's strengths and encourage them to strengthen weaknesses.
4. The morale of the total school, including faculty, staff and students, shall be of sufficiently high quality to allow the program to be effective.

N. HEALTH & SAFETY

1. All schools must have at least one member of the staff for every 50 students properly trained and prepared to administer First-Aid/CPR at all times.
2. A separate First-Aid or Isolation Room must be provided for the isolation of ill children. This room must contain a comfortable cot and a complete First-Aid kit. This kit must be available at all times to all staff members and must be placed out of the reach of children.
3. All personnel shall have a valid Health Certificate signed by a Physician.
4. In case of contagious disease, the school must comply with existing State law.
5. At no time shall children be without adult supervision.
6. Schools should have 24/7 surveillance cameras covering exterior and interior areas.
7. Driveways should be clearly marked with directional signage for safe drop-off/pick-up of students.
8. Pedestrian walkways must be clearly marked and separate from driveway areas.
9. Driveways must have sufficient vehicle stacking spaces for safe drop-off of students.
10. Dismissal times must be staggered and dismissal process needs to be safe and well defined.
11. Traffic signs advising drivers to slow down for children must be visible.
12. Where dangerous traffic is in proximity to outdoor play areas, area must be protected with a tall fence with protective stanchions.
13. Playground equipment, buildings and grounds of the school shall be free of safety hazards including unfenced or broken equipment in play areas, exposed electrical wiring, dangerous stairways, broken glass, dangerous/broken flooring, inadequate ramps, poor lighting, lack of signage, etc.
14. All cleaning supplies, chemicals, gardening and maintenance tools must be kept and stored out of children's reach at all times.
15. All parents must be given a tour of the campus, including all playground areas, prior to their child commencing school. Parents are required to sign acknowledgment that they have toured the campus and consider playgrounds safe and appropriate for their child.
16. Fire extinguishers should be sufficient in number and type, properly placed around the school as required, and maintained and inspected regularly.
17. A log of monthly fire drills must be maintained and posted at the main office. An annual "Emergency Preparedness" drill for lockdown or other emergency must also be posted and results of these drills must be documented.
18. An accurate site plan with clearly identified Fire/Emergency exit routes must be placed by each room's primary exit door. Primary and secondary exit routes must be clearly defined with red/blue striping.
19. Published "Health & Safety" policies must be provided and readily available. Health & Safety issues must be discussed during all faculty meetings.
20. Schools must have a published "Emergency Procedures Manual" and all Teachers, Students and Staff must be trained and familiarized with all the emergency procedures of the school. This Manual must be provided to the entire school community in either printed or electronic format.
21. Schools must have "Accident/Incident Forms" available for Teachers/Staff at all times. These must be properly filled out giving all details of any accident or incident that takes place. One copy must be given to parents when child is picked up, and one copy must be filed in students' personal file.
22. Per State Law, all students must be fully immunized and must be screened for Scoliosis during their 7th Grade year per Immunization Guidelines.

O. NON-HARASSMENT POLICIES

1. All schools must have written policies with regard to Harassment and Bullying, including cyber-bullying. These policies must include the following:
 - a. All forms of harassment must be strictly prohibited. The term "harassment" includes, but is not limited to, slurs, jokes, and other verbal, graphic or physical conduct relating to an individual's race, color, sex, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, citizenship, age or disability. The term also includes sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, offensive touching, and other verbal, graphic or physical conduct of a sexual nature.
 - b. Violation of this Policy by either an Employee or a student will subject them to disciplinary actions that may include immediate discharge, expulsion or possibly even criminal charges.
 - c. Staff, faculty members and students are trained and given information regarding sexual harassment at the beginning of each school year.
 - d. Students are instructed to immediately report to a member of the school's Faculty or Administration any incidents of harassment.
 - e. Once someone is identified as a harasser, a member of the Administration must document the incident, confront the person(s) being accused and commence a grievance procedure to determine the disciplinary action and/or any appropriate strategies that will help mediate the situation.
 - f. All claims of sexual harassment will be thoroughly investigated and documented accordingly.

P. COMPLIANCE WITH STATE/FEDERAL LAWS AND REGULATIONS

1. Schools must be in compliance with all applicable Federal, State, County and City health, safety and sanitation codes, including immunization schedules and any local regulations, including Radon.
2. Schools must be subject to regular local Department of Children and Families (DCF), Health Department and Fire Department inspections. Schools participating in federally -funded programs shall also be inspected by each entity to ascertain compliance of their standards.
3. All Licenses, including Health Dept., Fire Dept., Zoning Dept., DCF, etc. must be current and must be clearly displayed at all times.
4. Schools must comply with all Child Abuse & Neglect Reporting requirements defined in www.dcf.state.fl.us/abuse/report

Q. TRANSPORTATION

1. Schools that do not own buses but have the need to "sub-contract" buses or vans must clearly indicate this in all brochures. A disclaimer clause must be included in all Field Trip permission forms. Vehicles not owned and registered by the school must not advertise the school's name.
2. Schools that own buses must abide by the following:
 - a. All drivers must be reliable, careful and properly licensed, according to State law.
 - b. Vehicles must be regularly inspected by qualified personnel and operate in accordance with applicable laws. This inspection report must be posted in a conspicuous place.
 - c. Adequate insurance must be maintained on all vehicles. The minimum amount of vehicular coverage shall be at least \$2,000,000.00 per occurrence.
 - d. Schools failing to meet these requirements must give evidence from an insurance carrier in writing of inability to obtain or just cause for not complying.

R. PHYSICAL PLANT; FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT

1. The plant, equipment and facilities shall be suited to the purpose and adequate for the operation of the total program of the school. They shall be maintained in a manner assuring the health and safety of the students, faculty and staff.

2. Schools must maintain a proper age-appropriate educational atmosphere.
3. Schools must maintain a written maintenance schedule.
4. School facilities must be in compliance with all State and Federal environmental laws.
5. All buildings should be of sound construction, should provide sufficient light and ventilation, and should be properly cleaned and maintained. All ramps and steps must be code compliant and cannot pose a tripping hazard.
6. Air-conditioning and heating units should be adequate and in good working order at all times.
7. Sufficient sanitary drinking fountains must be provided at convenient locations throughout school.
8. Closets, storage space and shelves should be provided for needed equipment and classroom materials.
9. Students must be provided with individual storage areas, lockers or cubbies.
10. Restrooms must have outside ventilation. There should be at least one toilet and one wash basin (sink) for every twenty (20) children, with a minimum of two (2) for each school. Restrooms must be kept clean and odor-free. Each bathroom must have a mirror, towel and soap dispenser and sufficient waste receptacles with liners.
11. Restrooms must be designated for different grade divisions or age group; i.e. pre-school, elementary, middle and high school.
12. Self-contained classrooms serving exceptional education students must have their own bathroom or one that is in close proximity and easily accessible to the students throughout the day.
13. At least one shower must be available at each Campus.
14. Play areas must be properly equipped and maintained. They must be completely fenced in. Outdoor equipment should be scaled to meet the needs of each age group. They should be sufficient to provide physical activities, social development and imaginative expression.
15. All play areas must have a balance of sun and shade with adequate shade areas.
16. Outdoor playtime should not interfere with quiet study.
17. All toys, equipment and furnishings must be age-appropriate, safe and maintained in a sanitary condition.
18. Fire escapes and stairways must be in good repair and properly lighted and identified.
19. Any building over one story must be provided with at least two well-lighted separated stairways.
20. All buildings must be classified as fire-resistant or of construction as approved by the Fire codes of the local ordinances.
21. Food serving and preparation areas must be in compliance with existing local and state health and sanitation codes. All areas must be kept clean and free of infestation. Where applicable, kitchen equipment must be in good condition and suitable for the needs of the school.
22. Waste receptacles must be adequate and strategically located throughout the school. These must be clean and odor-free. Waste must be removed on a daily basis, or several times a day, as needed.
23. All roofs and exterior walls may not show evidence of deterioration.
24. Doors, windows, screens, furniture and equipment must be kept in good state of repair.
25. Grounds should be equipped with a flagpole in good repair, and the flag(s) should be displayed at all appropriate times.
26. An American Flag must be displayed within each classroom.
27. Outdoor play and recreational areas must provide ample space for a variety of activities suitable for each age group.
28. Campus safety is paramount. All facilities, equipment and playgrounds must be inspected regularly and a weekly maintenance log must be kept on file.

S. TEXTBOOKS, TECHNOLOGY, INSTRUCTIONAL AIDS, ARTS & SCIENCES and ATHLETICS

1. Textbooks:
Student Textbooks must be sufficient in number and age-appropriate. Copyright dates must be within seven (7) years. E-Books or books on Apps are acceptable.
2. Technology:
 - a. The technology infrastructure must be modern, fully functional and must support the school's teaching, learning and operational needs of students and teachers.
 - b. Sufficient number of computers with flat screen monitors must be available for student use inside each classroom and/or in a Media Center.
 - c. High speed Internet with access restrictions must be readily available throughout the campus, preferably with WI-Fi capabilities.
 - d. Students must use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish and update individual or shared writing products, taking advantage of technology's capacity to link to other information and to display information flexibly and dynamically.
 - e. Faculty and Administration should be encouraged to keep up with the latest technological advancements through continued education course, workshops and/or seminars.
 - f. The school must have an updated website that contains all pertinent information about the school.
3. Instructional Aids:
 - a. Each classroom must have a large variety of audio-visual equipment, including: top of the line Computer(s) with flat screen monitors, SMART Boards, Promethean Boards or similar projectors, Laptops, iPads, etc.
 - b. Inventories of instructional aides must be available.
4. The Arts:
 - a. Art materials must include a variety of age-appropriate media approaches, materials and supplies that are readily available to every class. A detailed inventory with all materials and equipment must be readily available.
 - b. Music must include a variety of age-appropriate musical instruments. A detailed inventory with all materials and equipment must be readily available.
5. Science:
 - a. Elementary and Middle Schools must have a designated Science Lab area containing an adequate number of age-appropriate materials and supplies.
 - b. High Schools must have a separate room designated as a "Science Lab" that is ample enough to accommodate the largest class. The Lab must contain an adequate number of age-appropriate materials and supplies.
 - c. A computerized inventory of all Science Lab materials and equipment must be readily available.
6. Physical Education:
 - a. Physical Education equipment must include an adequate number of age-appropriate athletic equipment, exercise equipment and supplies used to improve coordination and encourage healthy lifestyle and fitness.
 - b. All equipment must be safe and properly maintained at all times.
 - c. School must provide age-appropriate athletic program options to the students throughout the year.

T. LIBRARY/MEDIA CENTER

1. The Library/Media Center can be centralized or decentralized.
2. The Library/Media Center must have adequate print and electronic resources to support the educational program.
3. Policies regarding library use must be published and readily available.
4. Adequate records are kept including catalogues, inventory of print and electronic resources and acquisitions.
5. Students shall be encouraged to utilize E-Books and books on iPads.
6. Teaching library and research skills must be a part of the school's published Curriculum.

7. A centralized library must have at least enough space to accommodate the largest academic class at one time and must contain appropriate furniture. It must be conducive to reading and studying and it must be open and available for maximum use by the students.
8. A variety of periodicals and newspapers (print and non-print) must be available to students at all times.
9. The library shall show evidence of technological formats in support of the school's curriculum.
10. The school must have a policy for responding to challenged materials.

U. SUPPORT SERVICES - MORAL AND ETHICAL DEVELOPMENT

1. All schools shall provide support services to meet the physical, social and emotional needs of the students being served.
2. Faculty members shall provide or coordinate programs necessary to meet the needs of all students.
3. Reliable measures of program effectiveness should be in place and this data should be used to measure or evaluate all programs.
4. Emphasis should be placed on the moral and ethical development of each individual child. Programs must be implemented to address these areas.
5. Character Education shall be an integral part of each school's philosophy and program. It is strongly recommended that this type of training embrace service to the school and to the community at large.
6. Moral and ethical values and teachings of urbanity and etiquette should be incorporated as part of the overall curriculum within each accredited school.
7. All schools must have a published CODE OF ETHICS, per 6B-1.006 "Principles of Professional Conduct for the Education Profession in Florida."

V. SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

1. Schools shall stress the importance of community relations by establishing and maintaining productive school-community interaction within a positive and democratic framework.
2. In order to familiarize students with community resources and awareness, schools shall be involved in a continuous program of planned community activities, charitable events, field trips, public guest speakers, etc.
3. Schools are encouraged to communicate with each other with regard to concerns about faculty or student applicants, when deemed necessary.

W. GRADING AND REPORTING

1. All teachers must consistently use common grading and reporting policies, processes and procedures based on clearly defined criteria that represent each student's attainment of content knowledge and skills.
2. Grading and reporting shall be based on clearly defined.
3. Criteria that represent the attainment of content knowledge and skills and that are consistent across grade levels and courses.
4. The policies, processes and procedures shall be formally and regularly evaluated by the school's Administration.
5. Parents must be informed of their child's overall progress through Progress Reports and other various sources including Parent Teacher meetings.

SECTION V - PRE-SCHOOL/EARLY CHILDHOOD

A. ENVIRONMENT

1. It is recognized that there is a broad variation in the development of all children between the ages of two and five years.
2. Children entering Pre-School and Kindergarten should be placed in an environment that is loving, comfortable, safe and supportive of the developmental needs of each child.

3. Although literacy components are required, a strong emphasis must be placed on the process and the experience of learning. The daily schedule should offer extensive flexibility without creating frustration for the individual child.

B. ASSESSMENTS – CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT PROCESS

1. Continuous Improvement Process:

The school implements a continuous improvement process that provides clear direction for student improvement in all learning areas. The process includes action planning that identifies measurable objectives, strategies, activities, resources and timelines for achieving all improvement goals.

2. VPK:

Students in VPK must be assessed three times during the school year utilizing the VPK Assessment Online Reporting System. The VPK Assessment includes progress monitoring measures in the areas of Print Knowledge, Phonological Awareness, Mathematics, and Oral Language that are aligned with the VPK Education Standards.

3. Kindergarten:

Upon entering Kindergarten, the school should administer the Florida Kindergarten Readiness Screener (FLKRS), the statewide Kindergarten screening used to assess the readiness of each child for Kindergarten. This assessment includes a subset of the Early Childhood Observation System (ECHOS) and the first two measures of the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills for Kindergarten (DIBELS). Results will serve to determine school readiness. Standard Achievement Test (SAT) Test Series, Tenth Edition, should be administered to Kindergarten students prior to the end of the school year.

C. CURRICULUM

The Curriculum in the pre-school levels must be State approved. It must be developmentally appropriate, designed to prepare a student for early literacy and serve to enhance the age-appropriate progress of students in attaining the state-adopted performance standards. Teachers must prepare students to be ready for kindergarten as determined by the statewide kindergarten screening. The Curriculum ~~should be State approved and~~ must have clearly defined standards for each age level. Standards must address the following areas:

- *Visual Reception and Comprehension*
- *Auditory Reception and Comprehension*
- *Oral Language Development*
- *Gross Motor Skills*
- *Fine Motor Skills*
- *Linguistic Development*
- *Cognitive Development*
- *Emotional Development*
- *Tactile Development*
- *Physical Development*
- *Social Development*
- *Mathematics Readiness*
- *Science Readiness*
- *Social Studies Readiness*
- *Music Objectives*
- *Arts and Crafts Objectives*
- *Integrated Computer Technology*

D. FLORIDA REQUIREMENTS

All pre-school programs are to comply with Florida Statutes 402.305-5057 (App. D), Child Care Standards per Florida Administrative Code, and all rules of the State of Florida's Department of Children and Families, Chapter 10M-12, Child Care Standards.

E. STUDENT/TEACHER RATIOS

Grade Level	Maximum Child to Staff ratios	Maximum Group Size
Infants (Birth to 12 months)	4 to 1	8
Toddlers (13-24 months)	4 to 1	8
Two-Year Olds (25-35 months)	6 to 1	12
Three Year Olds	9 to 1	18
Four Year Olds	10 to 1	20
Five Year Olds	12 to 1	20

NOTE: When mixed age groups of infants and toddlers are in the same room, the child staff ratio is maintained according to the youngest child in the room. If the children in the mixed age group are older than toddlers, the child-staff ratio is maintained according to the average age of the children.

F. ADMISSIONS

1. A child entering the five year-old level should be five years old by the dates established by Florida State law. Any deviation from this regulation must take into account the emotional, physical and academic development of the child and this must be documented accordingly. If a child is enrolled who does not comply with the entry dates established by State law, a clearly defined written notice will be given to the Parents wherein they acknowledge in writing that their child may not be eligible to enter the first grade in any School System.
2. Each school must publish their own "Admissions Policy" with clearly defined policies.

SECTION VI - ELEMENTARY SCHOOL & MIDDLE SCHOOL

A. ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

1. The Elementary school should be designed to develop the basic skills and understandings in numerous areas of learning. The school must be actively working toward the goals stated in its objectives and outline of study. Areas usually covered in such a course of study include:
 - a. Language Arts, including reading, writing, listening and speaking Mathematics
 - b. Natural Sciences
 - c. Social Sciences
 - d. Spanish (Foreign Language)
 - e. Health and Physical Education
 - f. Art, Music and Drama
 - g. Integrated computer technology
2. The Elementary and Middle School should be designed to provide age-appropriate experiences for children in:
 - a. Basic skills and understandings in the Language Arts and Math.
 - b. Essential knowledge in the field of Natural and Social Sciences to include an awareness of other cultures.
 - c. Recognition and appreciation of moral, spiritual and patriotic values, as part of the teachings of Character Education.
 - d. Habits conducive to wholesome development in the areas of physical growth and health.
 - e. A minimum of 150 minutes of physical fitness activity must be provided each week for students in Kindergarten through Grade 8.
 - f. Appreciation for the Fine Arts and Music.
 - g. Teachings and encouragement of responsibility, independent thinking, proper study skills and research techniques.
 - h. Constructive attitude toward obligations and willingness to accept responsibility.
 - i. Demonstrate evidence of recognition of student's individual differences and learning styles.
 - j. Evidence of opportunity for leadership, responsibility, self-expression and creativity.
 - k. Guidance and counseling should be an integral part of the program.

B. ASSESSMENTS – CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT PROCESS

1. Continues Improvement Process. The school implements a continuous improvement process that provides clear direction for student improvement in all learning areas. The process includes action planning that identifies measurable objectives, strategies, activities, resources and timelines for achieving all improvement goals.
2. Curriculum, instruction and assessment are monitored and adjusted systematically in response to data from multiple assessments of student learning and an examination of professional practice.
3. Schools are required to administer the Stanford Achievement Test, Tenth Edition (SAT), to all K-8 students during the spring of each year.
4. Individual result norms and medians or other meaningful interpretations must be given to each parent and must be filed in each student's individual file.

C. CURRICULUM

1. The Curriculum must be state approved. Curriculum guidelines, standards and benchmarks for each grade level must be readily available to Teachers either on hard copy or on digital format within each classroom. Teachers must apply these Standards to their respective Curricula.
2. The standards are designed to be relevant to the real world, reflecting the knowledge and skills that our young people need for success in High School and in their future careers.

D. STUDENT/TEACHER RATIOS

Grade Level	Maximum Child to Staff ratios	Maximum Group Size
Five Year Olds	12 to 1	20
Grades 1 to 5	20 to 1	20
Grades 6 to 8	24 to 1	24
All ESE Grades	5 to 1	10

E. E-LEARNING AND DISTANCE EDUCATION PROGRAMS

1.

- To ensure both quality and independence, COBIS schools incorporating asynchronous and synchronous learning opportunities (*enabled by the internet, audio, video, or other means*) must demonstrate compliance with all COBIS standards. E-learning offerings must be either:
- a. Developed and controlled by the COBIS school and/or
 - b. Supplemental programs (those not developed and controlled by the COBIS school, such as FLVS), must:
 - i. Be accredited by a regional accrediting agency and
 - ii. Must not exceed 25% of a student's course of study

SECTION VII - SECONDARY SCHOOLS

A. ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

The Council recognizes two Academic programs as follows:

1. The General Program:

In order for a student to graduate from the general program of a member school, student must show that he/she has completed a *minimum* of 24 units at the 9th grade level and above. These units should be distributed as follows:

- 4 English
- 4 Mathematics (Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II, choice of College Algebra, Trigonometry or Statistics)
- 3 Science (Physical, Biology, Choice of Chemistry, Physics or Astronomy)
- 3 Social Studies (American History, World History, ½ Economics and ½ Government)

- 2 Personal Fitness (1½ Physical Education, ½ Life Management /Health)
- 2 Foreign Language (consecutive years in same language - preferably Spanish)
- 1 The Arts (½ Fine Arts and ½ Performing Arts)
- 5 Electives

2. The Honors Program:

In order for a student to graduate from the Honors Program of a member school, student must show that he/she has completed a *minimum* of 24 Honor classes at the 9th grade level and above. Grades from these classes will be weighted accordingly. These units should be distributed as follows:

- 4 Honors or AP English
- 4 Honors or AP Mathematics (Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II, choice of College Algebra, Trigonometry or Statistics)
- 3 Honors or AP Science (Physical, Biology, Choice of Chemistry, Physics or Astronomy)
- 3 Honors or AP Social Studies (American History, World History, ½ Economics and ½ Government)
- 2 Personal Fitness (1½ Physical Education, ½ Life Management /Health)
- 2 Honors or AP Foreign Language (consecutive years in same language - preferably Spanish)
- 1 The Arts (½ Fine Arts and ½ Performing Arts)
- 5 Electives

3. AP Courses:

Students completing Advanced Placement (AP) Courses must pass the Advanced Placement Examination during the month of May. These examples represent the culmination of college-level work in a given discipline in a secondary school setting. Rigorously developed by committees of college and AP High School faculty, the AP Exams test student's ability to perform at a college level.

4. Dual Enrollment:

High School students enrolled at a COBIS Accredited school may simultaneously enroll in a college course. The credits that students earn may be used toward their high school graduation and/or be acceptable toward a college Associate or Baccalaureate degree, or Technical Certificate. Students must abide by the criteria for enrollment is indicated in their website: www.mdc.edu/asa/dual.asp#whatis

B. ASSESSMENTS – CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT PROCESS/PLAN

1. Continues Improvement Process/Plan. The school implements a continuous improvement process or plan that provides clear direction for student improvement in all learning areas. The process includes action planning that identifies measurable objectives, strategies, activities, resources and timelines for achieving all improvement goals.
2. Curriculum, instruction and assessment are monitored and adjusted systematically in response to data from multiple assessments of student learning and an examination of professional practice.
3. Schools are required to administer the Stanford Achievement Test, Tenth Edition (SAT), to all 9th thru 11th Grade students during the spring of each year. Students in 10th and 11th Grades are required to also take the PSAT.
4. Individual result norms and medians or other meaningful interpretations must be given to each parent and must be filed in each student's individual file.

C. CURRICULUM

1. The Curriculum must be state approved. Curriculum guidelines, standards and benchmarks for each grade level must be readily available to Teachers either on hard copy or on digital format within each classroom. Teachers must apply these Standards to their respective Curricula.
2. The standards are designed to be relevant to the real world, reflecting the knowledge and skills that our young people need for success in College and in their future careers.

D. STUDENT/TEACHER RATIOS

Grade Level	Maximum Child to Staff ratios	Maximum Group Size
Grades 9 to 12	32 to 1	32
All ESE Grades	5 to 1	10

E. E-LEARNING AND DISTANCE EDUCATION PROGRAMS

1. To ensure both quality and independence, COBIS schools incorporating asynchronous and synchronous learning opportunities (enabled by the internet, audio, video, or other means) must demonstrate compliance with all COBIS standards. E-learning offerings must be either:

- a. Developed and controlled by the COBIS school and/or
- b. Supplemental programs (those not developed and controlled by the COBIS school, such as FLVS), must:
 - i. Be accredited by a regional accrediting agency and
 - ii. Must not exceed 25% of a student's course of study.

F. COMMUNITY SERVICE

All High School students are required to complete 100 hours of Community Service.

G. ACTIVITIES

Activities are a vital part of a student's growth and development. All activities offered must be under the ultimate supervision of the School Head. The direct supervision of all such activities must be by a qualified adult.

H. STUDENT SERVICES

The school must provide adequate services in the areas of guidance and counseling to assist the students in the choice of Curriculum, future vocation, College plans, adjustment to academic and social pressures, the development of self-esteem, and the development of personal integrity and moral values.

APPENDIX A - CODE OF ETHICS

1. The welfare of students will be the primary concern in all decisions regarding Ethics and Standards.
2. A school must carry out commitments made to students, teachers, staff and faculty members school organizations, parents, patrons and the general public.
3. A school will maintain and communicate a purpose and direction that commits to high expectations for learning as well as shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning.
4. A school will carefully avoid misleading or ambiguous statements about its Philosophy, stated missions and status.
5. A school will not knowingly initiate attempts to bring about the transfer of a student from another independent school.
6. A school will not accept a student for enrollment without first requesting from the current school all pertinent information concerning the student's academic and personal records and the reason for the transfer. The transfer of students from another city, state or country may be an exception.
7. A school recognizes its obligation to keep, protect and preserve the records of a student's attendance and achievement. A school will take all reasonable and lawful measures to maintain the confidentiality of reports and information exchanged among schools concerning the students and parents.
8. School officials, including administrators, will not seek to encourage a teacher or an administrator from another school to break a valid contract.
9. A performance appraisal and the teacher's qualifications should be supplied by the School Head upon request and such information should be confidential within the prescriptions of the law.

10. When awarding financial aid based on need, reasonable efforts should be made to ensure that such an award does not exceed the demonstrated need of the family. COBIS schools are encouraged to require adequate documentation of family financial resources.
11. A school will make clear all dates concerning the admission procedure and adhere to those dates. A candidate for admission and the parents will be informed of the complete costs of the forthcoming school year and the applicable payments schedules.
12. A school recognizes the right of its enrolled students or families to visit and consider other schools without notifying the present school. It also recognizes and respects the right of another school to hold preliminary discussions about the possibility of admission without notifying the present schools.
13. A school respects the right of a teacher to visit and consider employment in another school without notifying his/her present school, and it recognizes and respects the right of another school to hold preliminary discussions about the possibilities of employment without notifying the present school. However, no binding contractual arrangement should be formalized without communication with the current employer.
14. The School Head and all employees in that school bear the ultimate responsibility of fulfilling this Code of Ethics.
15. All Employees are required to read and acknowledge compliance with SB172, the Ethics in Education Act.
16. The Council of Bilingual Schools encourages ongoing communication among member schools to ensure compliance with the spirit of this Code of Ethics.