

Southern Association of Colleges and Schools  
Commission on Secondary and Middle Schools



**REPORT OF THE QUALITY REVIEW TEAM**

For

**Alabama Christian Academy**  
Mr. Ronnie Sewell, President  
Mr. Lanny Witt, Principal, High School  
Mrs. Melissa Faulk, Principal, Elementary School  
Dr. Milton Slauson, Superintendent, Internal Facilitator

**QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW REPORT  
USING  
SACS CASI IMPROVEMENT PROCESS**

COUNCIL ON ACCREDITATION AND SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT  
SOUTHERN ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES AND SCHOOLS

May 2 – 3, 2005

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## **Roster**

### **Quality Review Team**

Mr. Wiley Cutts, Assistant Vice-President (Chairperson)  
Faulkner University  
Montgomery, Alabama Christian Academy

Gayla Sellars, Elementary Teacher  
Saint James School

Lana Mann, Middle School Teacher  
Trinity Presbyterian School

Ginger Wright, Retired Principal  
Wetumpka High School

## **Introduction**

A quality review team representing the Council on Accreditation and School Improvement of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools made an on-site visit to Alabama Christian Academy in Montgomery, Alabama on May 2 – 3, 2005. The school hosted a breakfast on Monday morning at 7:15 a.m. in the conference room when members of the visiting team were introduced. The on-site visit is in fulfillment of the quality review phase of the SACS School Improvement Process. The five-year on-site review visit is a part of the process of continuing accreditation by the Council on Accreditation and School Improvement of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. Members of the review team included Wiley Cutts, Assistant Vice-President (Chairperson), Faulkner University, Ginger Wright, retired principal, Wetumpka High School, Lana Mann, Trinity Presbyterian School, and Gala Sellers, Teacher, Saint James School. In conducting the on-site five-year review, the quality review team was responsible for:

1. Assessing the adequacy of the self-study process.
2. Identifying strengths of the school deserving of commendations.
3. Developing recommendations that may help to strengthen the programs of the school.
4. Assessing compliance with the Non-Public School Standards for Accreditation 2004.
5. Developing a written report of findings.

In fulfillment of the team's responsibility, members:

1. Reviewed documentation provided by the school.
2. Conducted interviews with personnel and other stakeholders.
3. Applied the Standards of Accreditation.
4. Developed a draft of commendations and recommendations.
5. Contributed to the content and focus of the written exit report.
6. Provided input as to the determination of continuing accreditation.

Alabama Christian Academy has a total enrollment of 985 students from kindergarten through grade twelve and serves students from Montgomery, an urban community in Montgomery County that has a population of 221,980 while also serving students from Elmore and Autauga Counties. The school staff consists of a president, a superintendent, two principals, one assistant principal, one full-time and one part-time counselor, and fifty-seven full-time classroom teachers, four full-time aides, and one full-time substitute who functions as an aide when not teaching. There are also several other support staff members. Over half of the teachers have advanced degrees.

The administration, faculty, and staff of Alabama Christian Academy have developed and maintained an instructional program adapted to the needs and interests of the students. The administration, faculty and staff believe that learning for a lifetime depends upon self-discipline and a willingness to continue learning. School personnel recognize that

students learn best in a safe and orderly environment that provides opportunities for success. Teachers, students and parents indicated very clearly that they feel that the school is safe and orderly. Alabama Christian Academy provides a broad curriculum, several co- and extra-curricular activities and services designed to meet the needs and interests of students at all levels.

The quality review team expresses appreciation to the administration, faculty, staff and parents of Alabama Christian Academy for the hospitality shown during the visit. The team challenges the faculty and administration to receive and study the report and accept those recommendations they believe will improve or enhance their school improvement initiatives.

### **Summary of Observations**

Alabama Christian Academy initiated the planning phase of the SACS School Improvement Process in the fall of 2004. In the planning phase, the National Study of School Evaluation School Improvement: Focusing on Student Performance was used as the primary tool for school and school patron representatives to conduct the self-study. School personnel, parents, students and board members worked collaboratively to address the six major components of the self-study.

1. An executive summary describing the significant achievements of the school during the recent past and identifying potential challenges for the school in the next five years.
2. A student and community profile that provides a description of student performance data, student and community demographics, school characteristics and the perception of stakeholders regarding the quality of the institution. The profile is very extensive and comprehensive and includes much data and data analysis that should be helpful to the school in the future.
3. A list of beliefs and mission statements that provide direction and purpose for the programs and services offered to students enrolled at Alabama Christian Academy.
4. Identification of a list of desired results for student learning that are critical to student achievement and will serve as a basis for the school improvement plan.
5. A school improvement plan concentrated on student learning in areas of identified need with appropriate strategies that the school must implement to improve student performance.
6. Evidence supporting progress made on goals set by the last School Improvement Plan.

A steering committee was comprised of seven members, including one internal facilitator who coordinated the activities associated with the self-study. The committee guided the school through the self-study process to develop the School Improvement Plan.

A concerted effort was made by the school staff to assure that all accreditation standards were met. All quantitative standards were achieved or exceeded, and all other standards were satisfied with varying degrees of sufficiency as indicated by the surveys taken by the faculty.

The quality review team is pleased to note that the school provide ample opportunity for various stakeholders to contribute to the process throughout the planning phase. There is much evidence of a high degree of participation by parents and other patrons of the school. The team believes that the school personnel with their patrons support faithfully the implementations of the SACS School Improvement Process and has made the commitment to improving student learning and the work of the school.

The executive summary along with the profile summarizes in an exemplary manner the accomplishments of the school in the past few years. Improvements were enumerated along with perceived weaknesses. The summary does an outstanding job of projecting expectations of progress for the next five-year.

Good use was made of NSSE material in surveying the faculty, students, and community to determine the stakeholders' perceptions of the quality of the institution. Charts and graphs were effectively utilized to convey the outcomes of the surveys. An excellent description of student performance data was presented as evidenced by test results and other data. Again there was very effective use of charts and graphs to future elaborate on the student performance data. Community and student demographics were discussed in great detail along with the characteristics of the school as it is now structured.

The committee did an exceptional job of involving all stakeholders in developing the mission statement along with the beliefs of the school community. A great deal of input was solicited and used from all constituents and the beliefs reflect the mission of the school. The missions and beliefs are stated in understandable terms. The school did a creditable job of analyzing the data gathered and developing goals for the student learning section.

For the next five years cycle, the faculty established five worthy goals to pursue. All of them are stated in terms that are clearly understood and measurable. In its pursuit of these goals, ACA should have a positive impact on student learning and on school improvement overall.

During the onsite visit, quality review team members:

1. Reviewed documentation made available by the school.
2. Interviewed school personnel, parents, students and parent representatives.
3. Met with the various working committees established by the school to conduct specific aspects of the process.
4. Made observations and classroom visits.
5. Throughout the process, met in deliberation to discuss and reach consensus on the work of the school.

**Consequently, the quality review team believes that Alabama Christian Academy has met accreditation and school improvement requirements set by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Committee on School Improvement.**

## **Commendations**

The quality review team commends Alabama Christian Academy for the following:

1. The positive academic climate is conducive to good learning.
2. Devotion of teachers to their students as indicated by parent and student comments.
3. Comprehensive and insightful Self-Study.
4. The Christian atmosphere as evidenced by daily chapel, full-time campus minister, and scripture displayed around the building.
5. For the commitment to the fine arts program in elementary, middle and high school.
6. The efforts to improve writing across the curriculum.
7. Clean, attractive and well-maintained building and grounds.
8. Mentoring of new teachers.
9. The commitment to professional development by implementing instructional strategies denoting their strengths and limitations.

## **Recommendations**

The quality review team recommends that Alabama Christian Academy consider the following:

1. Seek and hire the most qualified Christian teachers available and ensure that documentation is on file for each teacher.
2. Expand the curriculum to include forensics and possibly another foreign language.
3. Online access to student grades during reporting periods and online access to assignments.
4. More technology training for faculty and staff and continue to upgrade technology.

## **Conclusion**

The peer review team found Alabama Christian Academy to be an excellent school with a strong administration, faculty, and staff who are dedicated to the instructional needs of its students. The team found the school staff to be committed to the school improvement process as indicated by the exhaustive nature of the SIP and by the interviews held with faculty. The administrative staff is committed as a team to carrying out the plan for improvement.

The school improvement plan developed by teachers, parents, and students strongly suggested to the review team that much thought and work went into preparing it. It is clear to the team that the school and its patrons are willing and ready to carry out the action plans set by the improvement plan.

The review team sincerely hopes that the recommendations presented in this report will help to continuously improve the overall quality of its programs. The school is reminded that it is obligated to consider all the team's recommendations and to implement those that it believes will help improve its programs.