



California Association for Bilingual Education

DATE: July 26, 2023  
TO: Board of Directors  
FROM: Edgar Lampkin, Ed.D.  
CC: Coordinating Council  
  
SUBJECT: **WASC ACCREDITATION PURSUIT**

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I am writing to share a proposed accreditation pursuit from the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC). Accreditation is a voluntary, rigorous, and comprehensive process by which an external accrediting body evaluates an educational institution's programs, practices, and overall quality against established standards of excellence. It serves as a seal of approval that attests to an organization's commitment to providing high-quality education and continuous improvement in its field. WASC is one of the six regional accrediting agencies in the United States that evaluates educational institutions for their quality and effectiveness. Many California high schools and institutions of higher education are accredited by WASC. WASC accreditation holds immense value in the educational community and would raise CABE's rigorous standards of excellence, enhancing our reputation as a leader in bilingual education.

**Benefits of WASC Accreditation for CABE:**

Credibility and Recognition: WASC accreditation is widely recognized and respected in the education community. Achieving this accreditation signals to our partners that CABE maintains high standards of quality and effectiveness in its training programs. This credibility lends itself to the creation of specialized badges, micro credentials, and/or certifications in the field of bilingual education, which can be particularly valuable for adult learners seeking to enhance their skills and advance their careers.

Commitment to Continuous Improvement: The accreditation process requires a thorough self-assessment and commitment to ongoing improvement. Pursuing WASC accreditation encourages CABE to continuously evaluate its programs and offerings, ensuring they remain relevant, innovative, and responsive to the evolving needs of educators and families.

Enhanced Professional Development: Accreditation status elevates the value of CABE's training for school principals and teachers. Educators can feel confident that the training they receive is based on sound pedagogical principles and aligned with industry best practices, leading to meaningful and impactful professional development experiences.

Greater Access and Partnerships: WASC accreditation can open doors to potential partnerships with other accredited institutions, governmental bodies, and education organizations fostering partnerships that amplify the impact of research and initiatives. This can expand CABE's reach and increase opportunities to collaborate with like-minded entities, especially in the field of bilingual education. Accreditation may open doors to new funding streams that support CABE's research projects and the development of community engagement standards.

Dissemination Impact: Accreditation can bolster the dissemination impact of CABE's current and potential future research. Accredited organizations often have broader access to academic and research networks, facilitating the dissemination of research findings to a wider audience.

Opportunities for Future Accreditation Approvals: Accreditation from WASC opens doors for future approval support for Course Accreditation for secondary and higher education dual enrollment courses that can lead to teacher preparation

Education courses, Ethnic Studies courses, and Language Fluency courses that can lead to Career & College Readiness Certifications for Interpreters and Translators in targeted languages in areas of medical, legal, education, social work, etcetera.

**Potential Drawbacks and Strategies for Mitigation:**

Resource Intensive: The accreditation process can be time-consuming and resource intensive. Preparing for accreditation requires significant effort, staff involvement, and financial investment. CABE leadership is prepared to allocate the necessary resources to meet accreditation standards and requirements. Engaging the workforce in the process will ensure a shared commitment to the pursuit.

Rigorous Standards: Accreditation standards can be demanding, and not all institutions may initially meet them. Institutions must be ready to address any gaps or areas of improvement to comply with the rigorous standards set by accrediting bodies. A preliminary review of WASC criteria suggests that CABE may need to strengthen assessment procedures for some of its learning programs, particularly in programs that award certificates or similar recognitions. Moreover, the consistent use of pre- and post-assessments can also support field data collection efforts for bilingual education research.

Ongoing Obligations: Maintaining accreditation requires ongoing efforts, including periodic reviews and reporting. Institutions must be committed to sustaining compliance with accreditation standards beyond the initial accreditation process. Once membership is attained, there may be concerns about the optics should CABE decide to withdraw from continued accreditation. A withdrawal could lead to questions about the organization's commitment to maintaining ambitious standards and continuous improvement. It may also raise doubts among stakeholders about the reliability of CABE's programs and initiatives. Thus, there is a need to commit to long-term and future growth in CABE staff as services grow.

**Financial Considerations:**

*To apply for WASC membership, there is a \$160 application fee. Upon preliminary approval, there is an \$880 virtual visit fee. There is also an annual membership fee of \$1,200.*

**Summary:**

In summary, pursuing WASC accreditation is an exciting opportunity for CABE to elevate our work in bilingual education. The benefits of WASC accreditation align seamlessly with our mission to support educators, parents, and students. While potential drawbacks exist, the team can navigate the WASC accreditation journey successfully. WASC accreditation will enable CABE to demonstrate our commitment to excellence, continuous improvement, and the advancement of bilingual education. As we embark on this pursuit, CABE staff are enthusiastic about the potential positive impact on our organization and the communities we serve. Together, we can elevate the standard of bilingual education, advance research, and initiatives, and make a lasting impact in the field. For CABE, seeking accreditation is a strategic endeavor that reinforces our dedication to promoting and enhancing bilingual education, while elevating our standing as a leader in the educational community. It also opens the doors for the development of potential future learning programs such as awarding higher learning credits.

Thank you for your support and leadership as we embark on this transformative journey towards WASC accreditation.