

Six Step Process and Protocol Adventist EDGE School of Excellence Award



Step #1 – APPLICATION

- A. School administration, staff and board will:
1. Participate in a local conference office of education Adventist EDGE School of Excellence orientation.
 2. Obtain the Adventist EDGE School of Excellence application from the Adventist EDGE web site: <http://adventistedge.org> and complete steps as outlined in the application.
 3. Use Adventist EDGE School of Excellence Analytical Scoring Rubric (Application, Section G) to determine individual score for each criterion, school's total score, and to identify possible areas of weakness.
 4. Work with the local conference office of education to prepare an attractive and user friendly documentation portfolio which includes evidence that supports the choice of Emerging, Progressing, or Ideal for each scoring rubric criterion. Documentation can include pictures, write-ups, letters, etc. The Documentation Portfolio Checklist (Application, Section H) should be utilized to list the evidence used to support each criterion.
 5. Develop action plans to improve targeted areas (Application, Section I).
 6. Determine a realistic goal of one or two years for completion of the process.
 7. If applying for SMART (Schools Making A Real Transformation) funding:
 - a. Determine amount of funding to request. (For every \$1 deposited by a school into the Adventist EDGE SMART Fund, the school will receive a \$2 match by the Southern Union. Every participating school could deposit a maximum of \$6,000 to receive a matching grant from the Adventist EDGE SMART Fund of \$12,000 for a total award of \$18,000.)
 - b. Include a budget indicating how the school will use the funds to become a school of excellence.
 8. Submit application, documentation portfolio, and SMART fund deposit to your local conference office of education. Local conference office of education will:
 9. Present application to the local K-12 Board of Education for approval
 10. Send SMART fund deposit check to the Southern Union Conference Office of Education

- B. Superintendent will distribute application and documentation portfolio to Superintendents' Advisory members, two weeks prior to the November Departmental Council, for review. Application and documentation portfolio should be in one of the following formats:
1. Electronic file
 2. Posted to school website
 3. Hard copy (14 copies)
- C. Application will be voted for approval by:
1. Southern Union Education Council in November
 2. Southern Union Board of Education in November/December
- D. Acceptance ceremony will be held at the Southern Union Board of Education in March. Representatives from applying school are to be present to participate as:
- School is acknowledged
 - School receives check for SMART Funds if applicable.
 - Pictures taken of school, conference, and union officials
 - Date for confirmation visit is set
- E. Following the acceptance ceremony school is to proceed with Step two.

Step #2: PREPARATION

- A. School contacts local conference office of education to arrange, with the Southern Union, a pre-visit to be conducted between six months and one year prior to the confirmation visit.
- B. Three individuals (two Union representatives and a conference representative) visit the school to assure the principal and board chair are clear on the Adventist EDGE School of Excellence rubric process and requirements.
- C. School completes action steps as outlined in the action plans, within the outlined timeframe.
- D. School administrator and board chair review analytical scoring rubric with the local conference office of education. Out of a total of 114 points, the goal will be to earn a total score of 103 or above during the confirmation visit, with no individual criteria score below 2.
- E. Local superintendent will verify the school is ready for a confirmation visit or will ask the Southern Union for an extension of time.

Step #3: CONFIRMATION VISIT

- A. School is visited by minimum of five individuals comprised of the following:
1. Two Southern Union representatives
 2. Two current or former conference superintendents or associates that are not from the host conference. (The host superintendent may be present as an observer.)

3. One administrator from a school that has received the Adventist EDGE School of Excellence Award or one retired worker that has Adventist EDGE School of Excellence confirmation visit experience
- B. A minimum of 103 out of 114 points must be obtained to receive the Adventist EDGE School of Excellence Award for a maximum of five years; term will be coterminous with the term granted by Adventist Accrediting Association (AAA). A school that scores less than 103 must wait a minimum of one year to schedule another confirmation visit. All schools will be required to have a re-confirmation visit when their term expires.
- C. Lunch is provided for the confirmation team by school.
- D. The day ends with an exit report to administration, faculty, staff, and local school board by the visiting committee. No evening meal or celebration, i.e. student group performances or parent attendance, is to be planned.

NOTE: Confirmation visit must be scheduled no later than the beginning of the third year, or matching funds received from the Southern Union SMART Fund must be returned. (Any exception to this criterion will require a voted action by the local conference Board of Education for a date extension due to catastrophic or emergency event , with a recommendation to the Southern Union K-12 Board for approval.)

Step # 4: CELEBRATION

- A. A celebration visit is scheduled a minimum of 30 days after the confirmation visit.
- B. At least two representatives from the Southern Union Office of Education will attend.
- C. The Southern Union Office of Education provides school a celebration program template, invitations and program printing protocol, and printed invitations and programs.
- D. Administration, school board, and the local conference office of education plan celebration, and email the following to the Southern Union Office of Education:
 1. Date of celebration
 2. Number of invitations and programs needed
 3. Program to be printed
- E. School board and administration send invitations to union and conference officials, teachers, church members, parents of students, students, city officials, etc. to attend the celebration.
- F. Southern Union bestows upon school the honor to add "School of Excellence" to school sign, letterhead and promotional documents.
- G. Southern Union also provides:
 1. Public recognition as an official Adventist EDGE School of Excellence
 2. Adventist EDGE School of Excellence

- Plaque
- Trophy
- Flag

H. School administration writes and submits article and pictures regarding the celebration to the local newspaper and local conference office of education for publication in conference newsletter and the *Southern Tidings*.

Step #5: PERPETUATION OF STATUS

The school board, administration, faculty and staff:

- A. Begin preparing, immediately after the celebration visit, for the next confirmation visit.
- B. Regularly submit articles and pictures to the local paper and local conference office of education for publication in conference newsletter and the *Southern Tidings*.
- C. Use the Adventist EDGE logo on all school stationery and documents
- D. Display the flag, plaque, and award trophy in prominent places for all to see
- E. Annually review Adventist EDGE School of Excellence criteria, maintain ideal and improve progressing criteria during the awarded term; submit status report to local conference and Southern Union offices of education by October 15, describing how:
 - ideal criteria are being maintained
 - progressing criteria have moved or are moving toward the ideal level
- F. Expect unannounced drop-in visits from:
 1. Southern Union representatives
 2. Local conference office education staff
 3. Local conference office administrators
- G. Prepare for a post-confirmation visit which will be scheduled at the mid-point of the term.
- H. When school leadership changes, develop a written plan for sustaining the EDGE School of Excellence rubric score of 103+ points during leadership transition. Submit to local conference and Southern Union offices of education by October 15 with status report.

Should a school lose its accreditation from the Accrediting Association of Seventh-day Adventist Schools, Colleges, and Universities, Inc. (AAA), EDGE School of Excellence status will be revoked, the School of Excellence plaque, trophy and flag must be returned to the Southern Union Office of Education and the term "School of Excellence" must be removed from all signage and marketing materials.

Step #6: RECONFIRMATION

- A. One year prior to the confirmation expiration period, school board and administration submit to the local conference office of education an application to continue the Adventist EDGE School of Excellence Award.
- B. School board and administration update the present documentation portfolio to reflect the following:
 1. A scored rubric using the most current Adventist EDGE School of Excellence Rubric posted on the Adventist EDGE website; out of a total of 114 points, a score of 103 or above must be maintained, with no individual criteria score below 2.
 2. Evidence that all ideal criteria have been maintained at the ideal level.
 3. Evidence that criteria classified as progressing from previous Adventist EDGE visits have moved or are moving toward the ideal level.
- C. Local Conference submits request to the Southern Union Office of Education for an official reconfirmation visit; date will be confirmed by the Southern Union.
- D. Reconfirmation visit is conducted concurrently with the school's AAA School Evaluation Visit and the exit report will be given at same time as the AAA visiting committee report.
- E. Based on the size of the school, the visiting team will consist of the following:
 - 1-4 teacher school—2 School of Excellence Award representatives
 - 5-8 teachers—3 School of Excellence Award representatives
 - 9+ teachers—4 School of Excellence Award representatives

Representatives must be from a conference other than the one in which the school is located and may not serve in a dual role as an AAA team member and School of Excellence Award representative.

- F. Celebration and perpetuation of status will follow the same steps as outlined above in Steps #4-#5. Exception: An engraved plate with the new term will be provided for the existing plaque, and the existing trophy and flag will serve for the new term.
- G. In the event EDGE School of Excellence status is not renewed the School of Excellence flag is to be returned to the Southern Union Office of Education and the term "School of Excellence" is to be removed from all signage and marketing materials.

PROBATION OR REVOCATION OF STATUS

In rare cases it may be necessary to either place a school on probation or revoke School of Excellence status before the term expires. If the Southern Union Office of Education receives notice that a school's performance has fallen below a score of 2 on any School of Excellence rubric criteria the steps below will be followed.

- A. Southern Union Director of Education will contact the school board chairperson, principal, and Superintendent to:
 - inform them of the notice that has been received
 - schedule an interview to gather evidence that confirms the school's performance has fallen below the score of 2 on one or more of the School of Excellence criteria
 - provide opportunity for school to submit a written response
- B. Evidence will be reviewed by the Superintendent's Advisory who will recommend either the school be placed on probation or School of Excellence status be revoked.
- C. Recommendation will be voted for approval by:
 - F. Southern Union Education Council
 - Southern Union Board of Education
- D. Letter will be sent by Southern Union Director of Education to the school board chairperson, principal and conference superintendent informing them of the action voted by the Board of Education
- E. If school is placed on probation they will receive one year to remedy the issue. The conference superintendent and two School of Excellence Award representatives will conduct an onsite visit to confirm the criteria score has been raised to 2 or above. If the issue is not remedied, then the School of Excellence Award is revoked and letter "H" below will apply.
- F. If the School of Excellence Award is revoked, the School of Excellence plaque, trophy and flag must be returned by the school to the Southern Union Conference Office of Education. The term "School of Excellence" must be removed from all signage and marketing materials.

After one year school may request a reconfirmation visit to reinstate School of Excellence status.