

Application for Initial Recognition as a “Reliable Authority Concerning the Quality of Education Offered by a School”

The purpose of this application is to determine whether your organization is a “reliable authority concerning the quality of education” offered by an accredited nonpublic school. The questions in this application have two purposes: (1) to determine your organization’s reliability in its accreditation authority, and (2) to determine your organization’s capability of helping schools maintain programs of acceptable quality.

When evidence required to answer a question is available in electronic format, please feel free to provide an electronic copy in lieu of paper copies. When evidence is available on a publicly accessible internet page, you may provide the web address as your response. If any evidence is password-protected, please provide passwords for security. If any evidence is password-protected or otherwise protected from disclosure, please describe the grounds for protecting that information from disclosure.

Answer all application questions and complete the certification at the end of the application. Contact Eric Heitz at eric.heizt@iowa.gov or Andrea Danker at andrea.danker@iowa.gov if you need more information.

Application Deadline: Sept. 1, 2026

The results of the application review will be presented to the Iowa State Board of Education at its Nov. 18, 2026 meeting.

Application Sections

There are four required sections in this application, and an additional section that may be required upon the request of the Iowa Department of Education (Department):

- Section A. Organization Information
- Section B. Accreditation Standards
- Section C. Accreditation Process
- Section D. Organization Structure, Citations and Audits
- Section E. Additional Information

Answer all questions about your organization to the best of your ability. Provide ample evidence as indicated.

Section A. Organization Information

Questions 1 through 6 are focused on basic organization information such as contact, descriptions and evidence needed to continue past Section 1 of the application process; as well as space to highlight any form of recognition for innovation or excellence for the organization’s work regarding school accreditation in this area.

1. Provide your organization contact and identification information.

Area	Completed by Applicant
Name of Organization:	
Telephone Number:	
Web Address:	
Form of Organization (corporation, LLC, etc.):	
Taxpayer ID #:	
Parent Organization, if any:	
Address of Parent Organization:	
Trade Name, if any:	
Contact Person:	
Address of Organization:	
Chief Executive or Authorized Representative:	

2. Provide evidence that your organization is a nonprofit, nongovernmental agency. *Note: If no evidence is provided, your organization is disqualified from recognition.*
3. Describe and provide evidence that your organization certifies, licenses, or accredits public and nonpublic elementary and secondary schools as providing a minimally adequate educational program. *Note: If no evidence is provided, your organization is disqualified from recognition.*

4. Describe and provide evidence about the accreditation standards that your organization uses to certify, license, or accredit public and nonpublic elementary and secondary schools as providing a minimally adequate educational program. Within this description include the following:
 - How the standards were developed and adopted.
 - How the standards are reviewed and revised.
 - Identify the research on which the standards are grounded.

Note: If no evidence is provided, your organization is disqualified from recognition.

5. Is your organization's principal business or activity advising or evaluating public and nonpublic elementary and secondary schools on "the quality of education?"
 - If yes, provide evidence.
 - If no, explain.
6. Has your organization received any form of recognition for innovation or excellence concerning its work?
 - If yes, provide recognition details.
 - No.

Section B. Accreditation Standards

Questions 7-11 are specific to your organization's accreditation standards. For these questions, **describe and provide evidence of the component of your organization's accreditation standards that require:**

7. A school to set high academic and nonacademic standards for all students, including preparation of students for postsecondary *success*.

8. A school to monitor and assess all students' progress toward high academic and nonacademic standards.
9. A school to recruit and retain properly licensed quality professional staff, and provide those staff members with ongoing professional development.
10. A school to set requirements for fiscal, data and contract management.
11. How your organization takes appropriate corrective action when accreditation standards are not met.

Section C. Accreditation Process

Questions 12-16 are focused on your organization's accreditation process, including accreditation criteria, monitoring, renewal, and any suspension or removal of a school from accreditation.

12. Describe the process by which a school seeks your organization's accreditation.
13. Describe the process by which your organization actively monitors a school's performance after it achieves accreditation based on your accreditation standards. Also, describe the process by which a school renews its accreditation through your organization.
14. Describe the process by which you suspend or remove accreditation from a school.

15. Describe any other criteria used by your organization to determine accreditation. The description should include the degree to which:

- a school implements, monitors and makes progress towards goals in its strategic improvement plan, and
- the organization gathers, analyzes and uses data to improve student learning and organizational effectiveness.

16. How does your organization know that it is effective in accrediting schools?

Section D. Organization Structure, Citations and Audits

Questions 17-32 are focused on your organization's overall fiscal, data and contract management procedures, as well as applicable citations/audit results.

17. Describe your organization's fiscal, data and contract management policies and procedures.

18. Are there any uncorrected citations of noncompliance by any governmental or nongovernmental agency or organization with jurisdiction/oversight of your organization, including any order entered in a contested case before an administrative agency?

- If yes, provide evidence.
- No.

19. Does your organization have any negative audit findings in the last five years?

- If yes, describe.
- No.

20. If the answer to question 19 was “yes,” has the finding been corrected?

- If yes, how did your organization correct the findings?
- If no, describe why the findings have not yet been corrected.

21. Has any state or federal court of competent jurisdiction entered any judgments, orders, decrees, verdicts, or injunctions against your organization, whether a claim or a counterclaim, in the last five years?

- If yes, describe.
- No.

22. If the answer to question 21 was “yes,” please give the present status of any judgment, order, decree, verdict, or injunction against your organization, whether a claim or a counterclaim.

Section E. Additional Information

23. Describe any other reports or findings sent to a nonpublic school regarding accreditation, including findings related to Iowa Code section 256.11 as amended by 2013 Iowa Acts, House File 215, section 89.

24. Indicate the number of schools your organization currently accredits.

25. List the states in which your organization provides accreditation.

26. Describe your working relationships with other state departments of education.

27. What school improvement tools, resources and expertise does your organization provide for its member schools?

28. Describe the applicant's stakeholder involvement in the accreditation process.

29. Describe the ongoing professional development requirements for those in the organization who assess a school's performance on the accreditation standards.

30. Indicate the beginning and end dates of your organization's fiscal year.

31. Provide your organization's most recent end-of-year financial statement.

32. Has your organization ever been disqualified from operating within any state or region?

- If yes, describe.
- No.