



Instructions for Schools Choosing Independent Accreditation

Overview

Effective **July 1, 2013**, nonpublic schools have the option to be accredited by an independent regional or national nonprofit, nongovernmental agency recognized as a reliable authority concerning the quality of education. The State Board of Education will maintain a list of the approved independent accrediting agencies published on the Department of Education's website.

- **Approved independent accrediting agencies**

- AdvancED/North Central Accreditation (NCA)
- American Montessori Society (AMS)
- Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI)
- Christian Schools International (CSI)
- Independent Schools Association of the Central States (ISACS)
- National Lutheran School Accreditation (NLSA)

Information for Schools

- **With what state and federal laws must an independently accredited school comply?**

A nonpublic school that participates in the accreditation process offered by an approved independent accrediting agency shall be deemed to meet the education standards of Iowa Code section 256.11. However, a school shall comply with all statutory health and safety requirements for school facilities and shall abide by all state and federal laws and regulations. Notwithstanding Iowa Code section 256.11, the department is not precluded from enforcing compliance with all state and federal laws and regulations.

- **What services are applicable to independently accredited schools?**

Independently accredited schools are eligible for the same services as any nonpublic school accredited by the State of Iowa, including tax credits, textbook, transportation, Title, and AEA services.

Instructions for Schools

When a school receives an ID number from the Iowa Department of Education, web-based reporting sites will allow the school to complete the following:

- Annually provide school address and contact information to the Department.
- Annually submit enrollment data through one of two options: BEDS Fall Enrollment or Student Reporting of Iowa (SRI).

- Annually provide the number of students by resident school district.
- Pursuant to Iowa Administrative Code rule 281—12.10, the school will annually make the following assurances:
 1. It assures it will comply with all requirements for nonpublic schools that are contained in the Iowa Code and Iowa Administrative Code, with the exception of the general accreditation standards contained in Iowa Code section 256.11.
 2. It assures that it will enforce laws concerning compulsory attendance.
 3. It assures it will comply with all statutory health and safety laws concerning school facilities, including compliance with state and local fire and building codes.
 4. It assures that it will comply with law concerning protecting student health and safety, including compliance with statutes and rules concerning child care standards, abuse of students, bullying and harassment, corporal punishment, and physical restraint and physical confinement and detention.
 5. It assures that it will comply with all applicable federal, state, and local civil rights laws.
 6. To the extent that it requests assistance or services for or on behalf of its students from a local school district or an area education agency, it will comply with all requirements imposed on nonpublic schools accredited by the state board of education for the receipt of such assistance or services.
- Collaborate with the local school district to coordinate Transportation, Title I, Title II – Part A, Title III, Title IVA, and Textbook Services.
- If operating Childcare, report standards to the Department of Education.
- Annually inform the Department of accreditation status for the coming school year.

Support and Guidance

Questions regarding nonpublic schools and independently accredited schools should be directed to: Holly Barnes, School Improvement Consultant, holly.barnes@iowa.gov.