



ACCREDITATION

All private schools participating in the Private School Choice Programs (PSCP) must meet statutory requirements for accreditation. Schools that fail to meet these requirements may be terminated from the PSCP.

New Private Schools

A school that has been in continuous operation in Wisconsin for less than 12 consecutive months or provides education to fewer than 40 pupils divided into 2 or fewer grades meets the definition of a new private school according to Wis. Stats. §§119.23(1)(ai) and 118.60(1)(bn).

New schools must meet the following accreditation requirements:

Preaccreditation: A new school must attain preaccreditation from an approved preaccrediting entity by December 15 of the school year immediately preceding the school year in which the new private school intends to participate in the PSCP. For instance, preaccreditation must be attained by December 15, 2016 if the school wishes to first participate in the PSCP during the 2017-18 school year. A letter from the preaccrediting entity must be received by the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) no later than December 15. A school may apply for and seek to obtain preaccreditation from only one preaccrediting entity.

If a school is fully accredited by an approved accrediting entity, it is not required to provide proof of preaccreditation; however, proof of full accreditation would be required by December 15.

Approved application for full accreditation: A new school must apply for full accreditation by an approved accrediting entity by December 31 of the first school year in which the private school begins participating in the PSCP. A letter from the accrediting entity must be received by DPI by December 31.

Full accreditation: A new school must achieve full accreditation by the approved accrediting entity by December 31 of the third year following the first school year in which the private school begins participating in the PSCP. For example, a new school first participating in the PSCP in the 2017-18 school year must attain full accreditation by December 31, 2020.

Existing Private Schools New to the PSCP

A school that has been in continuous operation in Wisconsin for more than 12 consecutive months and provides education to 40 or more pupils in 2 or more grades is defined as an existing private school. The definition of an existing private school includes private schools operated or managed by a governing body participating in the PSCP if no payment has been withheld or no order barring PSCP participation has been issued to any private school operated or managed by the governing body in the 3 immediately preceding school years.

Existing private schools must meet the following accreditation requirements:

Preaccreditation: An existing private school new to the PSCP must obtain preaccreditation by a preaccrediting entity by August 1 before the first school term in which the private school begins participating in the PSCP, or by May 1 if the private school begins participation in the PSCP during summer school. A school may apply for and seek to obtain preaccreditation from only one preaccrediting entity.

If a school is fully accredited by an approved accrediting entity, it is not required to provide proof of preaccreditation; however, proof of full accreditation would be required by August 1 or by May 1 if offering summer school.

Approved application for accreditation: An existing private school new to the PSCP must apply for accreditation by an approved accrediting entity by December 31 of the first school year in which the private school begins participating in the PSCP. A letter from the accrediting entity must be received by DPI by December 31.

Full accreditation: An existing private school new to the PSCP must achieve full accreditation by the approved accrediting entity by December 31 of the third year following the first year in which the private school begins participating in the PSCP. For example, if a school first participates in the PSCP in the 2016-17 school year, the school must attain full accreditation no later than December 31 of 2019.

Continuing Accredited Schools

Failure to maintain continuous accreditation may result in the school's termination from the PSCP.

Annual letter from accrediting entity: Annually by January 15, a school that is fully accredited shall provide to the department a letter from the school's accrediting agency stating whether the school is accredited as of the date of the letter. The letter shall include the following information:

1. The school's name.
2. The school's address for each location included in the accreditation.
3. The grades accredited.
4. A statement that the school is or is not accredited as of the date of the letter.
5. A date no earlier than the beginning of the school year.
6. A signature from an authorized member of the accrediting agency.

The department will notify the school within 10 days of receiving the annual letter.

The school shall notify the department immediately if its accreditation status changes.

A private school that is fully accredited by an approved accrediting entity is not required to obtain preaccreditation as a prerequisite to providing instruction in additional grades or in an additional or new school. If a private school is accredited for only elementary grades or only high school grades and wishes to add additional grades, the school must apply for accreditation for the additional grades by December 31 of the first school year that the private school offers instruction in the nonaccredited grades and must achieve full accreditation by one of the approved accrediting entities within three years for the new grades.

If a school learns that its accrediting organization is no longer an approved organization, the school must immediately notify the department in writing and obtain accreditation from an approved accrediting organization within 3 years.

Approved Accreditation Entities & Contact Information

Approved Preaccrediting Entities: Under Wis. Stats. §§118.60(1)(cm) and 119.23(1)(ap) an approved “preaccrediting entity” means the Institute for the Transformation of Learning at Marquette University (no longer preaccredits schools), Wisconsin North Central Association, Wisconsin Religious and Independent Schools Accreditation, Independent Schools Association of the Central States, Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod School Accreditation, National Lutheran School Accreditation, Wisconsin Association of Christian Schools, Christian Schools International, Association of Christian Schools International, and the diocese or archdiocese within which a private school is located.

Approved Accrediting Entities: Under Wis. Stats. §§118.60(1)(ab) and 119.23(1)(ab) an approved “accrediting entity” means Wisconsin North Central Association, Wisconsin Religious and Independent Schools Accreditation, Independent Schools Association of the Central States, Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod School Accreditation, National Lutheran School Accreditation, Wisconsin Association of Christian Schools, Christian Schools International, Association of Christian Schools International, the diocese or archdiocese within which a private school is located, and any other organization recognized by the National Council for Private School Accreditation.

Association of Christian Schools International

4081 N. Perryville Road
Loves Park, IL 61111
815-282-7070
www.acsi.org

Christian Schools International

3350 East Paris Avenue SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49512
800-635-8288
www.csionline.org

Independent Schools Association of the Central States

55 West Wacker Drive, Suite 701
Chicago, IL 60601
312-750-1190
www.isacs.org

National Lutheran School Accreditation

LCMS School Ministry
1333 S. Kirkwood Rd.
St. Louis, MO 63122
1-800-248-1930 ext. 1294
<https://www.lcms.org/schools>
<http://www.usccb.org/about/bishops-and-dioceses/all-dioceses.cfm>

National Council for Private School Accreditation (Full Accreditation Only)

PO Box 13686
Seattle, WA 98198
<http://www.ncpsa.org/>

The Diocese or Archdiocese within which the school is located

Listing of all Dioceses:

Wisconsin Association of Christian Schools

1840 Bond Street
Green Bay, WI 54303
920-499-5561
www.wacschools.org

Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod School Accreditation

N16 W23377 Stone Ridge Drive
Waukesha, WI 53188
414-256-3221
www.wels.net

Wisconsin North Central Association

1515 Burnt Boat Drive Suite C #344
Bismarck, ND 58503
1-888-413-3669 ext. 5754 (Regional Office)
www.advanc-ed.org

Wisconsin Religious and Independent Schools Accreditation

P.O. Box 685
Muskego, WI 53150
262-895-3679
www.wrisa.net