

POLICY AND GUIDELINES
for
Registration and Recognition
of
Nonpublic Elementary and Secondary Schools



February 2004

Foreword

In the spring of 1975 the Illinois State Board of Education called for the appointment of a committee of nonpublic school representatives to review possible policies and guidelines concerning nonpublic elementary and secondary schools. The Committee for Establishing Standards for Nonpublic Schools was appointed with twenty-one persons representing the Illinois Advisory Committee on Nonpublic Schools, the Catholic Dioceses, the Catholic Conference of Illinois, and administrative organizations. The committee was convened in October 1975 and made its first report to the State Board in January 1976. The report titled "Position Paper on the Relationship of Nonpublic Schools and the Illinois State Board of Education" stated the following:

"Each citizen of the state of Illinois has a right to an opportunity to obtain an education sufficient for the development of the individual's capabilities. This fundamental goal of education is set forth in the Illinois State Constitution, Article 10, Section 1.

The primary obligation for the education of the child belongs to the parents. The state derives its right to provide education to the extent that the state acts for the parents.

Formal education in our society is generally carried out within the framework of a school. It remains the parents' right and obligation to select for the education of the child either a public or nonpublic school.

Recognizing that some of the aims of the nonpublic schools are different from those of public schools and that the financial bases for nonpublic schools are also different from public schools, the Illinois State Board of Education shall not establish recognition policies that are identical for both types of schools. Rather, the Board will assume the integrity of those nonpublic schools, which are organized and operated in accordance with the principles of the state and federal constitution.

In providing education opportunities for all its citizens, the state shall as its primary responsibility to nonpublic schools:

- A. Provide information and services.
- B. Protect its citizens from fraud and abuse.
- C. Provide a process of registration of nonpublic schools.
- D. Provide a process of voluntary recognition of nonpublic schools.

The Illinois State Board of Education has established policies and guidelines to insure the integrity of nonpublic schools. These policies and guidelines were developed in consultation with the Illinois Advisory Committee on Nonpublic Schools.

Introduction

The Illinois State Board of Education is authorized by statute (see Appendix A) to determine policies and guidelines with respect to private (nonpublic) elementary and secondary schools in Illinois. These policies and guidelines are advisory. The Illinois State Board of Education has adopted the following policies for the voluntary registration and recognition of nonpublic elementary and secondary schools:

Nonpublic elementary and secondary school registration--That all nonpublic elementary and secondary schools in the State of Illinois be registered on an annual basis; such registration to be completed in conformance with procedures to be prescribed by the Illinois State Board of Education. Information required for registration shall include assurances of compliance with federal and state laws regarding health examination and immunization, attendance, length of term, nondiscrimination, and with applicable fire and health safety requirements. This policy became effective in July 1, 1977, amended 1980, 1984, 1996 and 2003.

Nonpublic elementary and secondary school recognition--That all nonpublic elementary and secondary schools in the State of Illinois that have been registered for at least one year may voluntarily seek the status of "Nonpublic School Recognition" from the Illinois State Board of Education. Nonpublic school recognition shall be attained through the selection and completion of one of the two approved processes. (See 3.00 or 4.00)

Certificate of Nonpublic School Recognition--Such status may be obtained by compliance with administrative guidelines and review procedures as prescribed by the Illinois State Board of Education. Such guidelines and procedures shall take into account the recognized diversity of nonpublic schools and shall not impinge upon the noneducational relationships between such schools and their clientele.

It is intended by the Illinois State Board of Education that nonpublic schools receiving the Certificate of Nonpublic School Recognition shall be viewed by all educational institutions and organizations as having state-approved educational programs. Furthermore, such certification should mean that the attendance of children at such schools shall not be a barrier to participation in organized extracurricular activities or to acceptance by secondary and post secondary educational institutions.

Requests for additional information, procedures, and materials for registration and recognition of nonpublic elementary and secondary schools according to these policies and guidelines should be directed to:

Illinois State Board of Education
Nonpublic Schools
Accountability Division
100 North First Street
Springfield, Illinois 62777-0001

Registration and Recognition

1.00 Nonpublic Elementary and Secondary Schools: Definitions

- 1.01 Nonpublic School--A school, which is established to serve a particular educational purpose(s), but is not established and operated by a public school board of education.
- 1.02 Registration--A school is registered when it has filed with the Illinois State Board of Education a "Nonpublic School Registration, Enrollment and Staff Report" (ISBE Form 87-01) furnishing such evidence as required to assure compliance with federal and state laws regarding health examination and immunization, attendance, length of term, nondiscrimination, and with applicable fire and health safety requirements. Registration forms are sent to schools in August of each year due to Regional Offices of Education on the first Friday in October. Regional Offices forward these registration forms to the Division of Data Analysis at the Illinois State Board of Education no later than November 15th of each year.
- 1.03 Recognition--A school is recognized when it voluntarily elects to conform to the minimum requirements as determined by the Illinois State Board of Education and set forth in this document. Schools may achieve recognition through one of the two processes described in these policies and procedures. However, once chosen, the school must continue recognition through this process until the next onsite visit is required.

2.00 Nonpublic Elementary and Secondary School Registration (Pre K-12)

- 2.01 Registration involves the following information and actions:
- A. All nonpublic schools in the State of Illinois shall complete and submit annually to the Illinois State Board of Education a "Nonpublic Elementary and Secondary Registration, Enrollment and Staff Report" (ISBE Form 87-01) and an "Immunization Survey Form" (ISBE 70-11).
 - B. The school year calendar shall consist of a minimum of 176 days of no less than five hours of instruction, or a yearly total of 880 hours of instruction.
 - C. The school shall comply with prevailing state or local fire safety requirements and shall maintain written evidence of an annual inspection.
 - D. The school shall comply with applicable federal and state laws regarding nondiscrimination.
 - E. The school shall maintain evidence of compliance with Child Health Examination and Immunization laws.

Nonpublic Elementary and Secondary School Recognition Processes

3.00 Process Number One:

- 3.01 To gain initial recognition, the responsible official of a registered nonpublic school shall submit to the Illinois State Board of Education, Nonpublic Schools, Accountability Division, a request for an application and official visit for purposes of achieving recognition. ISBE staff will review the school's Registration Report, communicate with the school and visit the school to validate its operations and programs.
- 3.02 Continuing recognition shall be based on schools' participation in Process Number One described in these policies and guidelines on a schedule determined by the Illinois State Board of Education and/or the completion of an annual nonpublic school application for recognition.
- 3.03 The composition of the visiting team will normally include a representative from the Illinois State Board of Education, the Regional Office of Education (ROE), a public school and a nonpublic school. The details of each school visit will be determined by ISBE staff in collaboration with the nonpublic school administrator.
- 3.04 Upon review of the final report, which will include the recommendation of the ISBE staff, the Illinois State Board of Education will grant one of the following:
- A. Full Recognition: granted to a registered school that voluntarily requests recognition and meets the criteria contained in these guidelines (Section 3.00 through 7.00).
 - B. Probationary Recognition: assigned to a school found to be deficient in meeting certain criteria contained in these guidelines, but whose deficiencies are not so serious as to deny continued recognition. This status is a warning that the school must make specified improvement within one calendar year from the date of assignment.
 - C. Nonrecognition: assigned to a school that substantially fails to meet the criteria in these guidelines as determined by an on-site evaluation. A school receiving such nonrecognition may reapply within one calendar year after requesting consultation with ISBE staff.
- 3.05 School officials will be notified of the recognition status and, if approved, a Certificate of Nonpublic School Recognition will be sent to the school.
- 3.06 The Certificate of Nonpublic School Recognition is awarded to those elementary, secondary, or unit schools whose program meets the Illinois State Board of Education criteria specified in these policies and guidelines.

A Recognized School may not extend such recognition to another site, school, or to students not in attendance at the site for which recognition was awarded. A Recognized Nonpublic School that issues diplomas to students not attending the program of studies for which recognition was awarded jeopardizes its recognition status.

- 3.07 Continued recognition will be based upon the submission of annual registration to the Illinois State Board of Education and periodic visits to the school. A school will be periodically visited for purposes of determining recognition status in terms of its progress in meeting its stated philosophical and operational goals and specified program objectives.
- 3.08 A responsible school official that wishes to appeal a recommended status of Probationary Recognition or Nonrecognition may do so by filing a formal statement of appeal within fourteen (14) days of the receipt of the letter of notification of the recommended status. The appeal notice shall be submitted to the State Superintendent, Illinois State Board of Education, with a copy to the appropriate Regional Superintendent. Within thirty (30) days of receipt of the appeal notice, the State Superintendent or his designee will convene a hearing to review all pertinent information, including the procedures that led to the recommended recognition status. The school official shall have the opportunity to present evidence that the program or service in question adequately satisfies the Guidelines.

The decision of the State Superintendent of Education shall be a final administrative decision.

The responsible school official shall be notified of the decision within thirty (30) days of the conclusion of the hearing.

4.00 Process Number Two:

- 4.01 Initial and continuing recognition may be based on schools' participation in Process Number Two described in these policies and guidelines on a schedule determined by the approved accrediting agency. Approved accrediting/accountability agencies will be required to submit annually to the Illinois State Board of Education a list of their accredited Illinois nonpublic schools.
- 4.02 For accreditation/accountability processes to be state approved, they must demonstrate that the criterion specified by these Policies and Guidelines for Nonpublic School Recognition have been met.
- 4.03 A nonpublic school recognition committee appointed by the Illinois State Board of Education will approve and document compliance by accreditation/accountability agency processes with nonpublic school recognition criteria established by these Policies and Guidelines for Nonpublic School Recognition.
- 4.04 A list of approved accreditation/accountability agencies shall be published annually by the Illinois State Board of Education.
- 4.05 Upon certification of a nonpublic school by an approved accrediting agency, the Illinois State Board of Education will grant one of the following:
 - A. Full Recognition
 - B. Probationary Recognition
 - C. Nonrecognition
- 4.06 School officials will be notified of the school's recognition status and, if approved, a Certificate of Nonpublic School Recognition will be sent to the school.
- 4.07 The Certificate of Nonpublic School Recognition is awarded to those elementary, secondary, or unit schools whose program meets the Illinois State Board of Education criteria described in these policies and guidelines for the recognition of nonpublic schools.

A Recognized School may not extend such recognition to another site, school, or to students not in attendance at the site for which recognition was awarded. A Recognized Nonpublic School that issues diplomas to students not attending the program of studies for which recognition was awarded jeopardizes its recognition status.
- 4.08 Continued recognition will be based upon the submission of annual registration to the Illinois State Board of Education.

Recognition Guidelines

5.00 Nonpublic Elementary and Secondary School Governance (Pre K-12)

5.01 Organization: Policies and Philosophy

- A. Each school or school system shall identify and describe in writing its policies and its policy-making procedure.
- B. The school's philosophy, purpose, and objectives shall be clearly expressed and approved by its governance.
- C. The school shall identify and describe its means for complying with applicable federal and state laws regarding nondiscrimination for students and personnel.

5.02 Administration: Supervision and Planning

- A. The administration and supervision of the school shall be the chief responsibility of a designated individual or individuals.
- B. Documentation of effective planning, operation, evaluation, and reporting shall be maintained.
- C. Provision shall be made for continuity and articulation of the program of studies.
- D. Provision shall be made for the progression of students and their records within and between schools.

6.00 Nonpublic Elementary and Secondary Instructional Programs and Services (Pre K-12)

6.01 Instructional Programs: Philosophy and Curriculum

- A. The educational program shall be developed from the school's philosophy, special purposes and objectives, knowledge of the educational and developmental needs of its students and shall serve the educational functions for which the school exists.
- B. The curriculum shall place emphasis upon the development of knowledge, skills, and understanding appropriate to its student body in accordance with its stated purpose, goals, and objectives. Such a curriculum shall:
 - 1. for elementary schools provide learning experiences which include, but are not limited to, the following: language arts, mathematics, science, social science, physical education, health, safety, fine arts, and technology;
 - 2. for secondary schools, meet state high school graduation requirements.

- C. The school's program shall consist of a minimum of 176 days of no less than five clock hours of instruction, or 880 clock hours of instruction within each school year.
- D. Schools shall describe the provisions they make for students of different talents, intellectual capacities and interests, as far as these are compatible with the special functions of the school.
- E. Schools shall provide a program of instruction that facilitates student learning. This program of instruction will include the following components:
 - 1. instructional objectives,
 - 2. lesson plans
 - 3. selection and use of a variety of learning materials and experiences,
 - 4. organizational and instructional adaptation to meet pupil needs,
 - 5. multiple assessment strategies for measuring student achievement.
 - 6. program evaluation instruments and procedures
- F. Upon completion of grades 5 through 8 and prior to graduation from high school, schools shall provide evidence that all students have passed examinations on the Illinois and United States Constitutions as required by P.L. 195. Proper use and display of the American flag shall be taught in all schools. No student shall receive a certificate of graduation without passing a satisfactory examination upon such subjects.
- G. A program of professional development shall be maintained to stimulate continued improvement of teaching and curriculum. Appropriate documentation of this program and activities shall be maintained.
- H. The school and classroom climate supports student learning.

6.02 Extra-Classroom Activities: Development of Leadership and Social Skills

Schools shall foster an appropriate intellectual, cultural, and social climate; promote growth in student leadership and social interaction skills; and encourage special student interests through a diversified and balanced program of extra-classroom activities.

6.03 Pupil Services: Diagnosis and Services

Each school shall identify and describe in writing how pupil services are provided for all enrolled students. A record of health examinations and immunizations as required by law shall be established and maintained.

7.00 Nonpublic Elementary and Secondary School Facilities and Support Services (PreK-12)

7.01 School Facilities: Building Safety and Fire Standards

- A. The site shall be accessible to the school population, as free as possible from traffic hazards and distracting noise, and functional for the instructional program.
- B. The building shall be clean and kept in good repair.
- C. The school shall have a crisis management plan to protect pupils and employees from injury.
- D. Schools shall be in compliance with applicable standards for heating, ventilation and illumination.
- E. Schools shall comply with prevailing state or local fire safety codes.

7.02 School Food Services: Balanced Meals and Service Operations

- A. If a school provides food service, the school shall offer a variety of well-balanced meals in accordance with applicable local, state, and federal regulations.
- B. Schools that receive reimbursement for food and/or milk programs shall follow state/federal guidelines for the operations of the program, certification of personnel, record keeping, and filing claims.

8.00 Nonpublic Elementary and Secondary School Personnel Qualifications (Pre K-12)

8.01 Policies and procedures for staff selection and assignment shall comply with federal and state regulations pertaining to nondiscrimination.

8.02 Teachers and other professional staff members shall hold a baccalaureate degree or equivalent formal education. However, a school may employ teachers or other professional staff on the basis of demonstrated competence in lieu of a baccalaureate degree or its equivalent. The school shall identify and describe specifically the measure used to determine competency or equivalency in its selection of teachers or administrators who have less than a baccalaureate degree or equivalent formal education.

8.03 Teachers shall demonstrate competency in teaching students at the particular level of assignment and display proficiency in their assigned areas. Teacher competency and proficiency shall be measured and monitored through a formal teacher evaluation process.

8.04 The administrator(s) of the school shall demonstrate to its governance competency in administration, supervision, evaluation and related administrative fields.

8.05 Administrators competency and proficiency shall be measured and monitored through a formal evaluation process.

Appendix A

PERTINENT SECTIONS OF PUBLIC SCHOOL LAWS OF ILLINOIS RELATING TO NONPUBLIC SCHOOLS

Illinois Revised Statutes Chapter 122-Schools

Article 26. Pupils - Compulsory Attendance

Section 26-1 Compulsory school age--Exemptions.

Whoever has custody or control of any child between the ages of 7 and 16 years shall cause such child to attend some public school in the district wherein the child resides the entire time it is in session during the regular school term, except as provided in Section 10-19.1; provided that the following children shall not be required to attend the public schools:

1. Any child attending a private or parochial school where children are taught the branches of education, taught to children of corresponding age and grade in the public schools, and where the instruction of the child in the branches of education is in the English language.

Article 27. Courses of Study--Special Instruction

Section 27-8.1 Health examinations and immunizations (P.A. 81-184)

- (1) In compliance with rules and regulations which the Department of Public Health shall promulgate, and except as hereinafter provided, all children in Illinois shall have a health examination as follows: Within one year prior to entering kindergarten or the first grade of any public, private, or parochial elementary school; upon entering the fifth and ninth grades of any public, private, or parochial school; prior to entrance into any public, private, or parochial nursery school; and irrespective of grade, immediately prior to or upon entrance into any public, private or parochial school, or nursery school, each child shall present proof of having been examined in accordance with this Section and the rules and regulations promulgated hereunder. Additional health examinations of pupils may be required when deemed necessary by school authorities.
- (2) The Department of Public Health shall promulgate rules and regulations specifying the examinations and procedures which shall constitute a health examination.
- (3) Every child shall, at or about the same time as he receives a health examination required by subsection (1) of the Section, present to the local school, proof of having received such immunizations against preventable communicable diseases as the Department of Public Health shall require by rules and regulations promulgated pursuant to this Section and "An Act in relation to the prevention of certain communicable diseases," approved July 5, 1967, as amended.