

ILLINOIS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Title Grant Administration Division
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INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

The Nonpublic School Recognition staff of the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) often receives requests from parents for information about the status of nonpublic elementary and/or secondary schools in which they may wish to enroll a child. The staff does not rate schools or attempt to advise parents about which school to choose; however, the following is a compilation of information and questions parents may wish to consider when visiting a school prior to reaching an enrollment decision for a child.

School Policies

- Are the written philosophy, purpose, and objectives of the school compatible with those of the parent(s)?
- Has the school established written governing and administrative policies and procedures?
- Do the school's written policies provide assurance that qualified administrators and staff are employed and appropriately assigned, and are provisions made for evaluation of their competence?
- Has the school adopted a written policy for discipline and established written regulations and procedures for disciplinary action? Do the parents agree that the code of discipline is fair, reasonable, and will be administered in a manner suitable for the needs of their child?
- Are the school's written policies regarding grade placement and advancement, achievement testing, class size, individual attention, graduation requirements, etc., appropriate for the child to be enrolled?
- Does the school have written policies and/or agreements with other schools for the enrollment and/or transfer of students and their credits?

Educational Program

- Are the school's curriculum, extra class activities and student services sufficient and appropriate for their child?
- Are academic, vocational and personal counseling services available and appropriate to meet the needs of individual students?
- Are standardized tests given in addition to teacher-made or textbook tests?

School Environment

- Does the school appear to be safe, clean, and operated according to applicable health and safety regulations? Are certificates of compliance and/or inspection reports posted or available for review?
- Is the school environment appropriate and one that is desired for the child?

Educational Approvals

- Is the school Recognized by ISBE under 105 ILCS 5/2-3.25o? This statute created a voluntary process by which nonpublic schools can be evaluated by ISBE.
- A Recognized school is one which has requested evaluation as described in 23 Illinois Administrative Code Part 425. If the evaluation determines that the school meets the guidelines for recognition, a Certificate of Nonpublic School Recognition is granted, and the school is listed in a directory of Recognized Nonpublic Schools for the next school year.

The following assurances were noted at the time of the evaluation for state recognition:

- a. The school offers appropriate branches of education and the instructional program provides for the educational and developmental needs of the students in accordance with the special purpose for which the school exists.

- b. The school is operated to achieve its philosophy, purpose, and objectives according to policies established by the governing entity of the school.
 - c. The administrative and teaching staff are qualified and appropriately assigned to their positions, and are provided with sufficient teaching materials and in-service training programs.
 - d. The school is operated in an environment that is conducive to the good health and safety of the students and staff.
- In addition to state recognition, many nonpublic schools are accredited by associations or organizations that evaluate the school according to standards prescribed by the association or organization. Two such organizations are the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (NCA) and the Independent Schools Association of the Central States (ISACS). Some schools have affiliations that evaluate schools, such as the work done by Catholic diocese education offices.
 - Some schools are only Registered with ISBE; a registered school has provided basic information and enrollment data to ISBE and is listed in a nonpublic school directory of all schools that may register. No approval is implied when a school is registered; registration is a prerequisite to recognition.