

How to Become an Accredited Non-Public School Iowa Step-by-Step Process

What do we need to do to become an accredited non-public school?

1. Any non-public school wishing to consider becoming accredited by the Iowa State Board of Education should access and review the following documents:
 - Application for Accreditation: Iowa Non-public Schools
 - Requirements for Accreditation: Iowa Non-public Schools
 - How to Become an Accredited Non-public School: Iowa Step-by-Step Process
 - Most recent comprehensive school improvement plan (CSIP) requirement checklist and technical assistance guide
 - Most recent annual progress report (APR) requirement checklist and technical assistance guide
 - Most recent on-site Document Review Checklist for Non-Public Schools
2. Following a review of the documents listed above, the school, with its governing board, will determine if seeking accreditation is feasible.
3. If the school and its governing board have determined to seek accreditation for the following school year (or a subsequent school year), the school will begin preparing the required documents: Application For Accreditation Non-Public Schools, a five-year Comprehensive School Improvement Plan, and an Annual Progress Report for the previous school year. The school will need to have all requirements met for accreditation to be granted.
4. The school will submit its application, CSIP, and APR to the following address: Director, Iowa Department of Education, Attn: Beth Happe, School Improvement Consultant, Grimes State Office Building, Des Moines, Iowa 50319, by January 1 of the school year preceding the school year for which accreditation is sought. A preliminary review of the documents by the Iowa Department of Education will occur.

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5. The Iowa Department of Education will schedule a preliminary face-to-face visit with the school in which all documentation and Chapter 12 requirements will be reviewed with feedback provided.
6. An on-site accreditation visit will be scheduled to validate that the school has met all Chapter 12 requirements as those rules apply to accredited non-public schools. A minimum of two Iowa Department of Education staff will conduct the visit.

7. After the onsite visit, the Department will provide a written report to the school regarding readiness for accreditation. If the Department recommends accreditation, that recommendation will go to the State Board of Education.

SAMPLE TIMELINE

The accreditation process could take from one to two years to complete. Prior to submitting the Application For Accreditation For Non-Public Schools the following steps and timelines must be followed:

- On or before January 1 of the school year preceding the school year for which accreditation is sought, the school submits a letter of request and application for accreditation to the Director, Iowa Department of Education.
- The school submits a Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (CSIP) and an Annual Progress Report (APR) to the Iowa Department of Education for compliance review. This APR would contain data from the previous school year.
- The Department of Education conducts an on-site visit to the school. Two things could happen as a result of the on-site visit: 1) a recommendation for accreditation is made to the Iowa Board of Education, or 2) accreditation requirements are not met and further work needs to occur for a recommendation to be made to the Iowa Board of Education. Further work can occur that can lead to accreditation at a later time.