



Wisconsin Religious and Independent Schools Accreditation ACCREDITATION NEWS

December 2017

Volume XXIII, Beatrice Weiland, Editor

Mission:

The Wisconsin Religious and Independent Schools Accreditation annually accredits schools that meet rigorous standards of excellence and demonstrate continuous school improvement.

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Notification Deadline for Choice Changes

The Department of Public Instruction has moved up the deadline for schools to present proof that they are accredited. January 15th is still in place for the current school year. However, the deadline has been moved to August 1st starting with the 2018-19 school year. Therefore, WRISA will send the Notification of Accreditation letters to the DPI in July rather than in December of 2018. Schools that hosted a Site Visit will have their Visiting Team Reports and Plans reviewed by the board in June rather than September starting in 2018. All other WRISA deadlines for submitting Annual Reports and paying membership fees remain on the same schedule as they are now.

WRISA Announces Partnership with Federally recognized Accrediting Association



The Wisconsin Religious and Independent Schools Accreditation (WRISA) is pleased to announce it has entered into a Co-operative Agreement with Middle States Association – Commissions on Elementary and Secondary Schools (MSA-CESS).

What can this mean for a WRISA accredited school? WRISA is providing another avenue for a school to become accredited by one of the federally-recognized accrediting associations. Historically, Wisconsin high schools were accredited through the North Central Association (NCA) which formed AdvancED. AdvancED covered the region that includes Wisconsin. In recent years, regional associations have expanded into areas beyond their traditional 'region' and now offer their services throughout the United States and the world.

MSA-CESS FAQ:

1. Why did WRISA take this action? WRISA wanted to increase its services to high schools, particularly high schools that are required by their jurisdiction to be accredited by a federally-recognized accrediting association.

As WRISA looked at ways to increase its services to these high schools, it determined Middle States Association – Commissions on Elementary and Secondary Schools (MSA-CESS) had the most in common with WRISA's mission and protocols. MSA-CESS is a federally-recognized accrediting

association as is AdvancED. In 2016, the WRISA Board of Directors entered into a dialogue with MSA to discuss a co-operative agreement. In 2017, the co-operative agreement was formulated and accepted by the WRISA Board of Directors and MSA-CESS.

2. Is a school required to apply for MSA-CESS accreditation? No.

3. Is there a way for a school to withdraw its membership in a different federally-recognized accrediting association and apply to WRISA? Yes. WRISA has a seamless process for transitioning from another accrediting association to WRISA without a loss in accreditation as long as the school is in good standing with the other association and meets the requirements on the Application Form provided by WRISA. For parental choice schools, this is very important. Contact the WRISA Executive Director for more information.

4. Does a school need to complete a separate Self Study or addendum? No. If a school chooses WRISA as the lead accrediting association, the school may use either of the two approved Self Study documents 'WRISA Standards with Quality Indicators' or 'Wisconsin Catholic School Accreditation (WCSA) Standards and Benchmarks' (for Wisconsin Catholic schools).

5. Must a school host two Visiting Teams?

No. A representative for MSA would participate fully on the WRISA Visiting Team. The representative would present an MSA Narrative Report and make a separate Recommendation for Accreditation to its Commission. If MSA is the lead accrediting association, a WRISA representative would participate fully on the MSA Visiting Team. The WRISA representative would present a WRISA Narrative Report and make a separate Recommendation for Accreditation.

6. Are there additional fees? A school pays WRISA's annual membership fee plus MSA's annual membership fee. MSA has additional fees for other services. Contact the MSA-CESS central office.

7. What is the accrediting cycle for MSA? MSA and WRISA have the same seven year cycle.

8. How can a school apply to MSA-CESS?

Contact the WRISA Executive Director.

For more information on MSA-CESS go to: <http://msa-cess.org/default.aspx?RelID=606498> or contact Beatrice Weiland at wrisa@wrisa.net.

Recognitions and Partnerships

The **Department of Homeland Security (DHS)** recognizes WRISA accredited schools seeking to enroll non-immigrant foreign students under the 'Student and Exchange Visitor Program' (SEVP) and 'Student/Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) certification process. As such, WRISA accredited schools are considered to be recognized by the U. S. Department of Education.

The **National Honor Society (NHS)** and the **National Junior Honor Society (NJHS) Council** recognize WRISA accreditation.

WRISA is approved by the **State of Wisconsin** to pre-accredit and accredit schools for the parental choice programs. Currently, WRISA accredits over 85 parental choice schools.

WRISA is a member of the **National Federation of Non-Public School State Accrediting Associations (NFSSAA)** composed of state accrediting associations that have a common purpose of promoting high quality non-public education. They serve nearly 200,000 children. (www.nfssaa.com)

The **Wisconsin Health and Educational Facilities Authority (WHEFA)** recognizes WRISA accredited schools that are looking for low cost capital financing for building and equipment improvement, and expansion needs. This includes old loans as well as new funding. To learn more about financing options go to www.whefa.com.

Board Accredits 266 Schools

At the September and November meetings, the Board of Directors accredited 266 schools. To view the complete list of schools, visit the WRISA website: www.wrisa.net after December 20, 2017 and click on the "WRISA Schools" link.

Schools Accredited for a Subsequent Cycle

Congratulations to the following previously accredited schools who continue to meet the WRISA Standards with Quality Indicators and demonstrate their commitment to excellence. These schools engaged in a Self Study process and underwent an intense review process by an impartial team of educational professionals. All engage in strategic planning.

All Saints Catholic School, Inc.	Kenosha	St. Agnes School	Butler
Cathedral School	Superior	St. Aloysius School	Sauk City
Chilton Catholic School	Chilton	St. Anne Catholic School	Somerset
Christ King School	Wauwatosa	St. Clement School	Lancaster
Cross Trainers Academy	Milwaukee	St. Francis de Sales School	Spoooner
Divine Savior School	Fredonia	St. Ignatius Catholic School	Kaukauna
Holy Rosary School	Darlington	St. John the Baptist School	Howard
Holy Trinity School	Kewaskum	St. John the Baptist Grade School	Plymouth
HOPE Christian Schools: Caritas	Milwaukee	St. John Vianney School	Janesville
HOPE Christian Schools: Fortis	Milwaukee	St. Joseph School	Fort Atkinson
HOPE Christian Schools: Hope High	Milwaukee	St. Joseph School	Prescott
HOPE Christian Schools: Prima	Milwaukee	St. Joseph School	Rice Lake
HOPE Christian Schools: Semper	Milwaukee	St. Katharine Drexel School	Beaver Dam
Kettle Moraine Lutheran High School	Jackson	St. Lucas Evangelical Lutheran	Milwaukee
New Testament Christian Academy	Milwaukee	St. Mary School	Algoma
Our Lady Queen of Peace School	Milwaukee	St. Mary School	Portage
Our Lady of the Lake School	Ashland	St. Rafael the Archangel School	Milwaukee
Peace Lutheran School	Sun Prairie	St. Roman School	Milwaukee
Prince of Peace/Principe de Paz	Milwaukee	St. Thomas More School-GRACE	Green Bay
Randolph Christian School	Randolph	St. Victor School	Monroe
St. Adalbert School	Rosholt	Trinity Lutheran School	Waukesha

Schools Accepted into Candidacy

The following schools have successfully met the WRISA pre-accreditation criteria, and have been accepted as Candidates:

Rock Prairie Montessori, Inc.	Janesville	St. Nicholas School	Freedom
St. Anthony School	Oconto Falls	Woodland Academy Lake Country, Inc	Dousman
St. Augustine Preparatory Academy	Milwaukee		

Schools Receiving Initial Accreditation

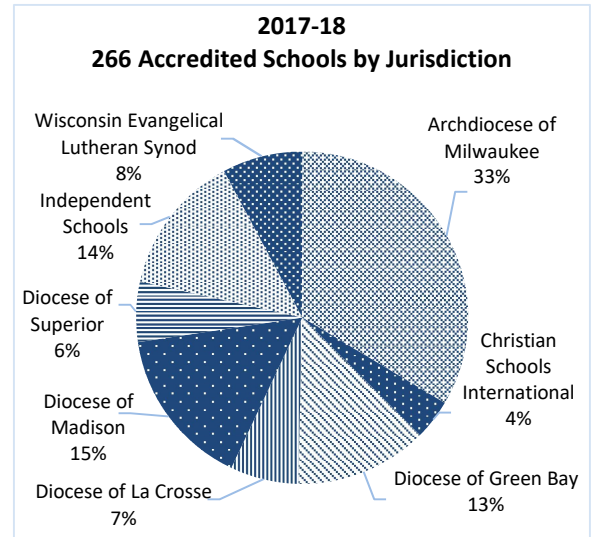
WRISA welcomes the following new members who successfully completed their Self Study and hosted a Visiting Team composed of peer professionals in education. These schools were found to be in compliance with the WRISA Standards with Quality Indicators and developed a Plan for ongoing growth and development of their educational programs. Congratulations!

A Promise of Hope Academy	Milwaukee	*Lourdes Academy High School (9-12)	Oshkosh
Divine Destiny School	Milwaukee	*Immaculate Conception (PreK-5) REGIS	Eau Claire
HOPE Christian Schools: Fidelis	Milwaukee	*St. James Elementary (PreK-5) – REGIS	Eau Claire
HOPE Christian Schools: Via	Racine	*St. Mary's Elementary (PreK-5) – REGIS	Altoona
Jo's Learning Academy	Milwaukee	*Regis Middle School (6-8) – REGIS	Eau Claire
*Lourdes Academy Elementary (K4-5)	Oshkosh	*Regis High School (9-12) – REGIS	Eau Claire
*Lourdes Academy Middle (6-8)	Oshkosh	Shining Star Christian Schools	Milwaukee

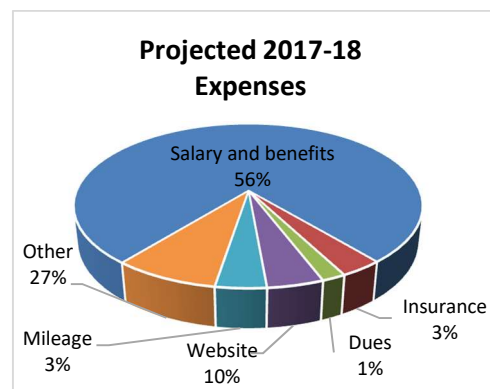
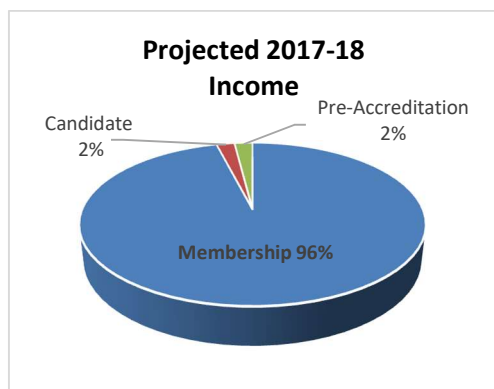
**Denotes schools accredited by another accrediting association and now accredited by WRISA.*

End of Year Report

Currently, WRISA accredits 266 non-public schools serving nearly 54,000 students throughout the great State of Wisconsin. This includes elementary, middle, high schools, and elementary through high school combinations. The diverse school communities include faith-based, independent, and specialty schools serving the needs unique to their student populations. In addition, there are 12 candidate schools with approximately 1,000 children enrolled. The smallest accredited school has ten or fewer students enrolled. The largest enrollment exceeds 1,900 students.



Thanks to sound fiscal management by the WRISA Board of Directors, WRISA's budget continues to operate in the black. The projected income for the 2017-18 school year is \$76,345 which is offset by projected expenses of \$76,345. Annual membership fees from 266 schools account for 96% of the income. The remainder comes from candidate application and progress report fees, and pre-accreditation application fees. Investment dividends are re-invested. Income is used to cover expenses including but not limited to: maintaining the WRISA office and website; paying insurance and professional membership dues; purchasing supplies and equipment; providing workshops and in-services; reimbursing work-related expenses such as mileage; and paying wages for one part time employee, the executive director.



The primary responsibility of the WRISA Board of Directors is the accreditation of religious and independent schools. Always striving to accomplish its mission and serve school communities and their stakeholders, the Board of Directors accomplished the following goals during the 2016-17 school year.

- Revised the WRISA mission statement to read: 'The Wisconsin Religious and Independent Schools Accreditation annually accredits schools that meet rigorous standards of excellence and demonstrate continuous school improvement.'
 - Developed a co-operative agreement with the federally-recognized Middle States Association: Commissions on Elementary and Secondary School. (See announcement on last page of Newsletter)
 - Developed a new Strategic Plan for WRISA.
 - Revised the Substantive Change form in the Annual Report.
 - Approved Wisconsin Catholic Standards Self Study document for Catholic schools and initiated a process for transitioning to paperless online reporting and storing documents.
 - Revised Parental Choice Pre-accreditation Criteria C and I.
- More than 99% of principals of WRISA schools hold a master's degree or higher in educational leadership. Majority of principals hold state principal licenses.
 - More than 99% of teachers of WRISA schools have bachelor's degrees or higher. The majority of teachers have state teaching licenses.
 - Others have Plans of Action to meet WRISA's education requirements.

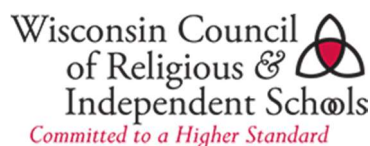
During Strategic Planning meetings, the Board developed the following goals for the 2017-18 school year:

- Evaluate visiting team process, composition, and training as conducted by the jurisdictions to ensure integrity and consistency of the onsite visit process.
- Develop a new comprehensive marketing plan to promote WRISA and improve accrediting services to all non-public schools in Wisconsin.
- Continue training Catholic schools on the Wisconsin Catholic Schools Accreditation Self Study document.
- Review Standard Quality Indicators as they apply to high schools.
- Review Standard Quality Indicators and protocols as they apply to 'system of schools', and revise documents as needed.
- Create an online capacity for paperless Self Study and Annual Reports.
- Publish a membership/board survey.
- Prepare a survey for schools following a Site Visit.
- Review and update the By-laws, if needed.

Board Welcomes New Members

WRISA thanks Kyle Heuver representative for the Christian Schools International (CSI) jurisdiction for serving on the WRISA Board for six years. Dave Van Swol, principal at Racine Christian School will fill the CSI position. WRISA extends its gratitude to Tom Reichenbacher who served as representative for the Diocese of La Crosse for three years. Jessica Williams, assistant superintendent for Catholic schools in the Diocese of La Crosse will fill the D-LAC position. WRISA thanks Dorothy Travis-Moore who served as a member-at-large for three years. Susa Givens, principal at Greater Holy Temple Christian Academy was appointed to fill the member-at-large position.

WCRIS Leadership Conference



Mark your calendar to attend the Wisconsin Council of Religious and Independent Schools' (WCRIS) Annual Leadership Conference at Country Springs Hotel, 2810 Gulf Rd. in Pewaukee, on February 9, 2018. To learn more and register, go to: www.wcris.org.