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|  | Wisconsin Religious and Independent Schools Accreditation  **ACCREDITATION NEWS** |

***Mission:***

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

***Board of Directors:***

Todd Blahnik, Diocese of

Green Bay (President)

David Schroeder, WELS (Vice President)

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Tom Reichenbacher, Diocese of La Crosse (Member)

John Soper, Ed.S., Archdiocese of Milwaukee (Member)

Jean M Suttie, Independents (Executive Director)

Executive Director – Leadership Change

This past October, Beatrice Weiland retired after 20 years of service to the schools and students of Wisconsin. She instituted many new initiatives during the years and made substantial updates to the accrediting association. **We thank her for her many years of service and wish her well in retirement!**

After a nation-wide search, Jean Suttie, was hired as the new executive director. Jean is a US Army Veteran, has an undergraduate degree in Elementary Education from UW Whitewater, and a graduate degree in School Administration from UW Superior. She has over 25 years of elementary school principal experience and was awarded the Herb Kohl Principal Leadership Award in 2019. Jean is well-versed in the accrediting process having had experience conducting accreditation Self-Studies, writing Annual Reports, and mentoring new schools in various stages of the accreditation process. In addition, Jean has participated on many Site Visits in small and large schools, and is familiar with the parental choice programs. Jean looks forward to meeting everyone in the WRISA community.

Thank You!

WRISA commends school leadership, teachers, and support staff for adjusting to the ever-changing landscape of learning during these challenging times. Thank you for all the time and work you have done and are doing supporting students, families, and one another and keeping each other safe. Thank you!

WRISA’s Respond to COVID-19

Schools continue to be flexible while providing educational services to our students during the COVID pandemic. Schools continue to follow the guidelines put forth by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction and local health departments.

Site visits have started up again and several more are planned for the remainder of the 2021-22 school year. Once again, schools are being flexible with scheduling while still meeting all WRISA standards.

The Board postponed or granted extensions to schools as needed. At this time, most schools are moving forward with their visits as scheduled.

Board Accredits 267 School

At the June and December meetings, the Board of Directors accredited **267** schools. To view the complete list of schools, visit the WRISA website: [www.wrisa.net](http://www.wrisa.net) after January 1, 2022 and click on the “WRISA Schools” link.

Schools Accredited for a Subsequent Cycle

Congratulations to these 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 by an impartial team of educational professionals. All engage in strategic planning. *(Alphabetized by location)*

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| |  |  | | --- | --- | | Appleton | Holy Spirit Catholic School | | Arcadia | Holy Family Catholic School | | Brillion | Trinity Evangelical Lutheran School | | Cedarburg | St Francis Borgia School | | Colby | St Mary School | | Cuba City | St Rose of Lima School | | Denmark | All Saints School | | East Troy | St Peter School | | Freedom | St. Nicholas School | | Germanton | St Boniface School | | Hartland | St Charles Parish School | | Lake Geneva | St Francis de Sales School | | Little Chute  Madison | St John Nepomuncene School  St Maria Goretti | | Milwaukee | Jo’s Learning Academy | | Milwaukee | Transcenter for Youth/NOVA | | Milwaukee | Holy Redeemer Christian Academy | | Milwaukee | Transcenter for Youth/El Puente | | Milwaukee | Blessed Savior School – East | | Milwaukee | Blessed Savior School – North | | Milwaukee | Blessed Savior School – South | | Milwaukee | Greater Holy Temple | | Milwaukee | St Josaphat | | Milwaukee | Salam School | | Milwaukee | St Matthias | | Milwaukee | St Augustine Preparatory Academy | | New London | Most Precious Blood School | | Oconomowoc | St Jerome School | | Oconto Falls | St. Anthony School | | Pewaukee | St Anthony of the Lake School | | Racine | Racine Christian School | | Shawano | Sacred Heart Catholic School | | Sheboygan | Christ Child Academy | | Slinger | St Peter School | | Spring Green | St John the Evangelist School | | Stone Lake | St Francis Solanus School | | Tilden | St Peter School | |  |

Schools Receiving Initial Accreditation

The following schools successfully completed the rigorous Self Study and Site Visit processes. The schools completed a Self Study and hosted a Visiting Team composed of peer professionals in education. The WRISA Board determined the school to be in compliance with the WRISA Standards with Quality Indicators. The school developed a Long Range Plan for ongoing growth and development of their educational programs. Congratulations to:

**Chesterton Academy**, Menomonee Falls; **Notre Dame de la Baie Academy**, Green Bay; **St Anthony de Padua Catholic School**, Athens; **Guidance Academy**, Milwaukee; **Shalom High School**, Milwaukee; **St Augustine School, Inc**, Colgate; **The City School**, Milwaukee.

Schools Accepted into Candidacy

The following school has successfully met the WRISA pre-accreditation criteria, and have been accepted as Candidates. Congratulations!

*Green Bay St. John Paul II Classical School*

End of Year Report

Currently, WRISA accredits 267 non-public schools serving more than 56,000 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. The smallest accredited school has 15 students enrolled. The largest enrollment exceeds 1,500 students. In addition, there are candidate schools with approximately 1,200 children enrolled.

Thanks to sound fiscal management by the WRISA Board of Directors, WRISA’s budget continues to operate in the black; maintaining a balanced budget. Annual membership fees account for 97% of the income. The remainder comes from pre-accreditation and candidate applications, progress report fees and support services. 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 the executive director.

Strategic Planning

The primary responsibility of the WRISA Board of Directors is the accreditation of faith-based and independent schools in the Great State of Wisconsin. Always striving to accomplish its mission and serve school communities the Board completed following goals during the 2020-21 school year.

* Reviewed and revised, as needed, all Standards with Quality Indicators and Glossary.
* Revised certain Standard Quality Indicators as they apply to high schools.
* Reviewed fee structure.
* Continued to review website and considered updates.
* 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.
* Reviewed responsibilities for representative for independent schools.
* Developed a response for current health emergency related to COVID-19 including a modified procedure for onsite visits.
* Prepared transitioning strategies for executive director position.

During Strategic Planning meetings, the Board developed the following goals for the 2021-22 school year:

* Complete and pilot paperless annual report submission/review process.
* Send out membership/board survey.
* Complete transition to new executive director.
* Make the Self-Study electronic.
* Map the different accrediting instruments to WRISA.
* Keep marketing and communicating with schools not in WRISA.
* Update WRISA website.

WRISA Annual Calendar

Please see the WRISA website wrisa.net to see an updated calendar of events with important dates and due dates.

***WRISA is a member of the National Federation of Non-public School State Accrediting Associations (NFNSSAA). WRISA is recognized by: the U. S. Department of Homeland Security’s Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) and Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) as such, WRISA accredited schools are considered to be recognized by the U. S. Department of Education; the State of Wisconsin for pre-accrediting and accrediting schools for the Parental Choice Programs; the Wisconsin Health and Educational Facilities Authority (WHEFA); the National Honor Society (NHS) and the National Junior Honor Society NJHS). WRISA has formed a Co-operative Agreement with Middle States Association: Commissions on Elementary and Secondary Schools (MSA\_CESS).***