

# WRISA

## ACCREDITATION NEWS

### Wisconsin Religious and Independent Schools Accreditation

The Wisconsin Religious and Independent Schools Accreditation serves school communities through standards of excellence that promote continuous improvement.

Volume XIII, 2007  
Beatrice Weiland, Editor

#### Board Accredits 255 Schools

At the September 19-20 and November 26, 2007 annual review meetings, the WRISA Board of Directors met in Madison and accredited 255 schools. The Board of Directors is the sole authority in determining the accreditation status of a school. This decision may differ from the "Recommendation" for accreditation made by the visiting team.

To view the complete list of schools, go to [www.wrisa.net](http://www.wrisa.net) after December 15, 2007, and click on the "WRISA Schools" link.

#### Schools Accredited for the First Time

After successfully completing an intensive self study and hosting a visiting team, the following candidate schools were recommended for and were granted initial accreditation by the Board of Directors.

Congratulations to:  
EAGLE School of Madison  
Mount Calvary Lutheran School, Milwaukee  
Our Redeemer Evangelical Lutheran, Madison  
Riverview Lutheran School, Appleton  
St. Joseph School, Prescott  
Westside Christian School, Middleton

#### Schools Accredited for a Subsequent Cycle of Accreditation

Congratulations to the following schools that completed a seven year cycle of accreditation. After conducting a new self study, these schools hosted a site visit and submitted new documents to the Board of Directors.

Catholic East, Milwaukee  
Christ Child Academy, Sheboygan

Holy Family School, Sheboygan  
Our Lady of Good Hope, Milwaukee  
Queen of Apostles School, Pewaukee  
Sacred Heart School, Reedsburg  
Sheboygan Christian School, Sheboygan  
St. Anthony on the Lake, Pewaukee  
St. Bernard School, Watertown  
St. Boniface School, Germantown  
St. Charles Parish School, Hartland  
St. Charles School, Burlington  
St. Dominic School, Sheboygan  
St. Francis Borgia School, Cedarburg  
St. Francis Solanus School, Stone Lake  
St. Jerome School, Oconomowoc  
St. John the Baptist School, Princeton  
St. John the Evangelist School, Spring Green  
St. Joseph School, Racine  
St. Joseph Inter-parish Junior High, Kenosha  
St. Luke School, Brookfield  
St. Maria Goretti School, Madison  
St. Mark Evangelical Lutheran, Green Bay  
St. Mary School, Burlington  
St. Mary School, West Bend  
St. Peter School, East Troy  
St. Peter, Slinger  
St. Rose of Lima School, Cuba City  
St. Thomas Aquinas School, Waterford

#### Annual Report Undergoes Changes

In December, 2007, the Standard Checklist in the online Annual Report packet will be replaced with a new Standard Quality Indicators Checklist that corresponds with the Standards and Quality Indicators recently adopted by the Board of Directors.

Additionally, WRISA will no longer send the blue Validation Sheet in a separate spring mailing. The 'Validation Sheet' that has traditionally been mailed out in April will be added to the online Annual Report form. Instructions related to filing the Annual Report

will be communicated to schools via the internet.

### **New Board Members Welcomed**

The WRISA Board of Directors welcomes new jurisdiction representatives: Diane Walters, Diocese of Green Bay; Monica Bischoff, Diocese of Madison; Susan Holman, Diocese of La Crosse.

The Board of Directors expresses its appreciation to Father Robert Kroll, ofm, who served on the Board of Directors as the representative for the Diocese of Green Bay for six years. Fr. Kroll served as president of the Board for four years. The Board of Directors thanks Anita Harris for serving as representative for the Diocese of La Crosse for two years, and Judi Dillon for serving as representative for the Diocese of Madison for three years and secretary of the Board for two years.

### **Board Approves New Fee Schedule**

In order to continue to provide a high level of service to the religious and independent schools of Wisconsin and meet rising costs, the Board of Directors at its May 14, 2007 meeting, approved a new fee schedule effective for the 2008-09 school year for the payment of annual dues.

#### **Fees Starting in the 2008-09 School Year**

##### **ACCREDITED MEMBER SCHOOLS**

1 to 100 students	\$115.00
101 to 200 students	\$145.00
201 to 300 students	\$175.00
301 to 400 students	\$200.00
401 to 500 students	\$230.00
501 to 600 students	\$260.00
601 to 700 students	\$290.00
701 to 800 students	\$320.00
801 to 900 students	\$345.00
901 to 1000 students	\$375.00
1000+ students	\$400.00

The Board will periodically review this fee schedule and adjust it as warranted.

### **Board Revises Standards and Self Study Document**

In an effort to improve the accreditation process and promote ongoing school improvement, the Board of Directors has revised the Standards. The result is a set of Standards that are more streamlined and current to today’s educational setting. Standards include “Quality Indicators” that serve as a barometer for how well the school meets the intent of the Standard. The Board also developed two additional Standards for schools with Early Childhood and/or Extended Day Programs.

The new Standards and Quality Indicators serve as the self study instrument, and will be the tool used by the visiting team to evaluate a school’s compliance with WRISA standards.

### **Long Range Plan Undergoes Revision**

As stated in WRISA’s mission statement, the primary goal of the association is to ‘promote continuous improvement’ in its member schools. In striving to accomplish this, the Board ensures that the schools are in compliance with the WRISA Standards. In addition, it encourages schools to move beyond ‘meeting’ all of the Standard Quality Indicators. The Board is adding a second prong to the school improvement model.

One prong consists of the **Strategic Plan** which is meant to address violations of Quality Indicators. If there is a violation of an ‘Essential’ Quality Indicator (identified by a double asterisk (\*\*)) and italics in the Standards, the school community has six months to correct the violation. During the six months, the school is considered “Accredited with Provision.”

To address partial compliance in other Quality Indicators or recommendations made in the visiting team or self study report, the school has three years to address these deficiencies and recommendations. During the three years, the school is considered “Accredited.”

School leadership and other members of the school community write goals and establish a timeline for each of the deficiencies and recommendations. These clearly articulated

goals should be entered into the Long Range Plan section in the Annual Report found on the WRISA website.

It is possible for a school to be in 100% compliance with the Quality Indicators and, therefore, would not need to enter goals in the Strategic Plan. In this instance, the school may choose to focus on a broader need of the school and develop a School Improvement Plan – the other prong of the school improvement model.

The **School Improvement Plan** is a five-year plan developed by the school that focuses on future needs of the school. It identifies broader areas of growth that will advance the school's mission. For instance, a school community may choose to develop a marketing plan as part of a comprehensive development plan. Another school community might concentrate its efforts on strengthening one area of its curriculum.

If a school community desires to do a School Improvement Plan, it should apply to WRISA. The school will be required to submit a rationale (in 150 words or less) for the choice of its topic for the School Improvement Plan. The Visiting Team may also recommend a school for this process. The Board of Directors reserves the final decision as to whether or not a school will be allowed to do the School Improvement Plan.

During the five years of the School Improvement Plan, the school community identifies the needs of the school and chooses its focus; applies to WRISA; once accepted, establishes goals and timelines for addressing the need; performs and monitors the activities needed to accomplish its goals; develops or chooses an assessment tool for measuring its success in accomplishing its goals. The principal reports the school's progress in its Annual Report to the WRISA Board of Directors.

## **Policy Handbook Revised**

The Board of Directors completed a comprehensive revision of the WRISA Policy and Procedures Handbook. This project was identified as one of the goals in the Board's long range plan. The revised handbook reflects current educational thought, language, and the WRISA policies and procedures related to the accreditation process. An added feature to the

handbook is a comprehensive glossary designed to aid school communities understand terms used in both the handbook and the Standards and Quality Indicators documents.

The handbook will be available to members on the WRISA website at [www.wrisa.net](http://www.wrisa.net).

## **Schools Eligible for WHEFA Grants**

The Wisconsin Health and Educational Facilities Authority (WHEFA) serves as the conduit for private educational and health institutions to access low cost capital financing for both new and existing construction loans. For information please go to [www.whefa.com](http://www.whefa.com).

## **Do You Know?**

255 religious and independent schools serving more than 53,000 children throughout the State of Wisconsin are accredited by WRISA.

22 religious and Independent schools serving more than 3,400 children are candidate schools.

WRISA is a Wisconsin-based accrediting association formed in 1991, by and for the religious and independent schools of Wisconsin. It is recognized by the State of Wisconsin in Public Law 119.23(2)(a)7.

WRISA is a state chapter of the National Federation of Nonpublic School State Accrediting Associations ([www.nfnssaa.org](http://www.nfnssaa.org)).

WRISA is recognized by the Wisconsin Council of Religious and Independent Schools (WCRIS), The National College Board, and the National Honor Society. The United States Department of Education/Office of Non-Public Education: Office of Innovation and Improvement accepts WRISA accreditation for their Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) program

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Discriminatory practices based on race, ethnicity, or national origin are not used in admissions or other services. Church affiliated schools may give preference to members of their faith as allowed by law.