

WRISA

ACCREDITATION NEWS

Wisconsin Religious and Independent Schools Accreditation

Volume X, Fall 2004
Beatrice Weiland, Editor

Board Accredits Schools

At the September 21, 2004 meeting held in Wausau, Wisconsin the Board of Directors met to accredit schools.

The Board fully accredited 247 schools; conditionally accredited 3 schools; and denied accreditation to one school.

New Fee Structure & Schedule Approved

At the February, 2004 meeting, the Board of Directors approved a new fee structure and due date for the payment of annual dues.

For the 2004-05 school year, the annual membership fee will remain at \$100.00 and will accompany the annual report at the end of this school year. For the 2005-06 school year, the annual membership fee will be paid in the fall rather than in the spring. Since schools are accredited at the September Board meeting, membership fees will be paid at the beginning of the year that the school is accredited rather than at the end of the year.

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 is instituting the following fee schedule and structure for the 2005-06 school year.

NEW FEE STRUCTURE AND SCHEDULE BEGINNING WITH THE 2005-06 SCHOOL YEAR

1 to 99 students	\$100.00
100 to 199 students	\$125.00
200 to 299 students	\$150.00
300 to 399 students	\$175.00
400 or more students	\$200.00

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



Board Fine-tunes Review Process

One area of the Board's strategic plan is to restructure the annual review process in order to ensure efficiency, consistency and quality in the evaluation process. The Board of Directors instituted two levels for the review of annual reports and visiting team documents.

For the annual reports, "the review" took place at the jurisdictional level. All reports were reviewed by a team appointed by the jurisdictional representative. All documents were reviewed at least twice. In some instances, reports went to a third reviewer. The reviewers made a recommendation as to the level of accreditation for each school. Once "these reviews" were completed, the reports were forwarded with recommendations to the executive director who prepared them for presentation to the Board of Directors at the September meeting. The members of the Board received the recommendations and took appropriate action.

At the second level, the Board reviewed the documents for all first time candidate schools and those starting a new seven year cycle. Each report was reviewed at least twice. The Board then discussed the merits of each report and voted on the accreditation determination.

WRISA Schools Eligible for WHEFA Grants

Recently, the State legislature expanded the authority of the Wisconsin Health and Educational Facilities Authority (WHEFA) to include the issuance of bonds for private, non-profit elementary and secondary educational institutions. Accreditation is one of the requirements for this process.

In May, WRISA was notified that its process satisfies the accreditation requirement in the application for these bonds. WHEFA itself does not lend money, rather it serves as the conduit for private educational and health institutions to access low cost capital financing.

For more information regarding WHEFA please go to the WHEFA website at www.whefa.com.

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

Developing the Long Range Plan

The long range plan is the school's roadmap for school improvement. After a site visit, goals should extend out into the next seven years.

After the site visit, the principal, school staff, and consultative/governing body develop a seven year plan based on all of the recommendations found in the self study and visiting team narrative, and all other goals that the school identifies.

The long range plan is both cumulative and progressive. Goals remain in the long range plan during the seven year cycle even after they are completed. Goals are deleted only after a full seven year cycle has been completed and the school has undergone a new self study and hosted a visiting team. In addition, new goals are added to the plan each year of the cycle.

Goals should clearly state what the school hopes to accomplish, a target school year for completion, the actual year that the goal is accomplished, and how the goal was accomplished. If there is a "no" checked on the Standards Checklist, there must be a corresponding goal in the long range plan and it must be identified in Column I in the long range plan. Once the "no" has been completed, the school should remove the item number from Column I.

Since the long range plan is a professional document, it should clearly articulate the schools goals, so that the WRISA review committee will have an accurate understanding of what the school has accomplished or hopes to accomplish.

It is the collective responsibility of the principal, staff, and consultative/governing body to design and implement the goals for school improvement.

New Member Joins Board

The WRISA Board of Directors welcomes Sister Joanne Wachowiak, SSJ, the representative for the Diocese of La Crosse. Sister is the principal at St. Paul Catholic School, Mosinee. Sister Joanne has been in education for a total of 46 years serving 26 years as a principal.

Sr. Joanne looks forward to working with the principals in the La Crosse jurisdiction. Having worked in large cities and rural communities, Sister understands the challenges that principals face. She sees the accreditation process as a real opportunity for evaluating the entire school program and developing a school improvement plan. She hopes that principals in the La Crosse jurisdiction will feel comfortable in contacting her and getting started in the process.

For more information, principals in the Diocese of La Crosse may contact Sr. Joanne Wachowiak, SSJ, at 715-693-2675 or fax at 715-693-1332.

Planning Work Continues

The Board continues to make progress on meeting its long range planning goals. A summary follows.

The revised policy and procedures handbook nears completion. Once approved, members will be able to access a copy of the handbook on the WRISA website.

Board members have received the proposed revised standards' statements from the Standards Revision Committee. At an upcoming meeting, the Board will meet to discuss the new language of the standards. Once this work is completed, the standards will be adopted and will serve as the basis for the initial and ongoing WRISA accreditation.

A marketing plan has been developed. There are approximately 1000 religious and independent K-12 schools in Wisconsin. 250 are WRISA accredited. WRISA continues to reach out to all religious and independent school communities that are interested in school improvement.

Progress has also been made on other goals, including the development of a three year budget, the restructuring of the annual review process, the development of support materials for jurisdictional representatives and principals new to the accreditation process, and research into developing an alternate accreditation process.

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 received accreditation.

Brother Dutton School	Beloit
Manitowoc Lutheran High School	Manitowoc
Nativity Jesuit Middle School	Milwaukee
St. Joseph Catholic School	Green Bay
St. Joseph School	Waterloo
St. Mary's School	Luxemburg

Board of Directors

Fr. Robert Kroll, ofm	President	D-GB
Phyllis Schlagel	Vice-President	D-SUP
Terry Hubbard	Secretary	LCMS-SD
Mort Zaydel	Treasurer	AD-MIL
Wayne Dykstra	Voting Member	CSI
Judy Peppard	Voting Member	D-MAD
Scott Bell	Voting Member	LCMS-SD
Sr. Joanne Wachowiak, SSJ	Voting Member	D-LAC
Jeff Inniger	Voting Member	WELS
Sue Nelson	Member at Large	AD-MIL
Beatrice Weiland	Executive Director	

Contact Information:

Beatrice Weiland, Executive Director
26538 Richard Drive, Wind Lake, WI 53185
262-895-3679
Website: www.wrisa.net Email: wrisa@wrisa.net