

WRISA

ACCREDITATION NEWS

Wisconsin Religious and Independent Schools Accreditation

Volume XI, 2005
Beatrice Weiland, Editor

Board Accredits Schools

At the September 20-21, 2005, annual review meeting, the WRISA Board of Directors met in Milwaukee to accredit schools.

The Board accredited 245 schools, accredited with provisions two schools, and denied accreditation to three schools.

New Members Join Board

The WRISA Board of Directors welcomes three new members; Peggy Schoenfuss, Diocese of La Crosse; David Van Swol, Christian Schools International; Judi Dillon, Diocese of Madison.

David Van Swol serves as principal at Racine Christian School, Racine. "I am interested in accreditation because I feel it is a way to help our schools grow and improve. Having served on several accreditation teams, I have seen first hand how the accreditation process causes schools to look carefully at their program, evaluate it, and find ways to bring that program to a higher level."

Peggy Schoenfuss is in her seventh year as principal at St. Joseph School, Stratford. "Through my own accreditation experience, as an administrator, I grew as did my school, the teachers and the parents. The accreditation process is a wonderful learning tool and a way to set goals to improve one's school. It is easy to do things the 'way they always have been done', but the accreditation process makes one look at new ways of doing things and at more modern methods of providing for an excellent education for the students. This process is an asset to the Diocese of La Crosse."

Judi Dillon currently serves as principal at St. John Vianney School, Janesville. She has been involved in Catholic education all of her life as a student, teacher and principal. "I have always set high standards for myself and those around me which correlates to the accreditation process for our schools. The accreditation process sets high, achievable goals for all schools. It is a plan and process to follow that suit my style... All accreditation processes should directly make life better for students. In my situation the first priority is faith development, followed by strong curriculum and a safe environment."

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 their initial accreditation.

Atlas Preparatory Academy (PreK-8), Milwaukee
Clara Mohammed School (PreK4-8), Milwaukee
Pilgrim Lutheran School, Menomonee Falls
St. Joseph School, Stratford
St. Paul School, Mosinee
St. Peter School, Middleton
Trinity Lutheran School, Kaukauna

"Provisional" What Does It Mean

The Board determines the accreditation status of schools by thoroughly examining the documents that they submit. In certain instances, the Board determines that a school needs additional time to work on certain recommendations identified by the visiting team, principal, or the WRISA Board.

The Board will "accredit" this school, but it places certain conditions on the determination. The Board uses the term "Provisional" to identify a school that needs to correct deficiencies identified by the Board. This means that the school is accredited but certain conditions apply.

Provisional status is temporary (usually lasting one year) and conditional. Once the school shows the Board that it has complied with the recommendations of the Board, the "provisional" status is removed at the next annual review meeting of the Board.

Revised Policy Handbook

The Board of Directors has approved a revised Policy Handbook. It is expected to be online before January, 2006, on the WRISA website: www.wrisa.net.

WRISA Fact

WRISA serves over 57,000 children in the State of Wisconsin.

Using the New Online Forms Q & A

"Early feedback from jurisdictional reps and principals on the use of the new online forms has been very positive," says Beatrice Weiland, executive director. Over 100 principals used the new forms. All schools now have usernames and passwords assigned to them. This year, a spell-check feature will be added to the site.

How do I get a username and password, or what should I do if I have a username and password but can't remember them?

All schools have been assigned a username and password which have all been activated. If you need a username and password or can't remember them contact your jurisdictional rep or the WRISA executive director.

How do I change my username and/or password?

Contact the WRISA executive director.

How do I access the new online forms?

Go to: www.wrisa.org and click on the link in the middle of the page
<http://www.wrisa.org/arp/Begin.aspx>. (Suggestion: add this link to your "Favorites.")

I filled in the circles on the Standards Checklist but they didn't print. What should I do?

This seems to be a problem related to individual computers and printers. Accessing your forms on a different computer and printing on a different printer usually resolves the problem. As a last resort, fill in the circles by hand.

When I filled in the information on the Staff Qualifications page all the columns are filled in, but when I print it, all or part of the last column is missing. What can I do to get all the information to appear on the printed page?

If text appears too large and/or doesn't fit on the page do the following: on the toolbar, go to View, click on Text Size, and then click on Smaller. You can also change the size of your margins by going to the File dropdown menu on the toolbar, click on Page Set-up and widen or lessen your left and right margins.

On the Long Range Plan, how can I add years to the "Target" column?

Contact the WRISA executive director.

Do I have to fill in the "Category" column?

No. Use the "Category" column only if your jurisdiction recommends that you organize your goals by category, or if you prefer to organize them by category.

Should I continue to keep the Standard Indicator number in the "Standard" column on the Long Range Plan once I have completed the goal?

No. Once a goal that was marked "No" on the Standards Checklist has been completed, you should remove the number from the "Standard" column. Be sure to include an explanation in the "Explanation" column on what was done to accomplish the goal.

When I go to print the Staff Qualifications page, it won't print. Why?

Each field on the Staff Report is only allowed a certain number of characters. See if limiting the amount of information you put in each text box will allow you to save. For instance, the "Grade or Content" field only allows 30 characters. If you type in "Grade 1" or "Science" that will work, but an entry such as "Science, Math, Biology, etc...." may cause an error. This problem has been encountered by several schools and will be fixed for next year's Annual Report Packet.

If you encountered other problems with the new online forms, WRISA is interested in knowing. Please send the details of the problem that you encountered to wrisa@wrisa.net. Thank you.

MISSION STATEMENT

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

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