

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 XVII, 2011
Beatrice Weiland, Editor

2011 Marks Anniversary

November 2011 marked a significant milestone for the Wisconsin Religious and Independent Schools Accreditation (WRISA). It was in that same month, 20 years ago that WRISA was formed by the Wisconsin Association of Non-Public Schools (WANS) now known as the Wisconsin Council of Religious and Independent Schools (WCRIS).

The WANS board of directors wanted to establish an independent accrediting association that would provide a measure of accountability to their own constituents and the public, would be affordable for large and small schools alike, and would be responsive to the needs of all religious and independent schools in the great State of Wisconsin. Thus, after much discussion, consultation, and planning, the Wisconsin Non-Public Accrediting Association (WNSAA) was born. WNSAA officially changed its name to the Wisconsin Religious and Independent Schools Accreditation (WRISA) in 2002.

Through the efforts of the original directors and all subsequent directors, WRISA has become one of the leading accrediting associations in Wisconsin. Currently,

- WRISA has 242 members schools with another 19 in candidacy.
- More than 58,000 students are being served.
- There are six stand alone high schools, 12 combination elementary thru 12th grade schools and 243 elementary only schools.
- Two candidate schools mission is to serve children with special needs.
- One member school's mission is to serve gifted and talented students.
- 253 schools have religious affiliations. Eight

schools are private schools with no faith affiliation.

- More than 95% of principals have their masters degree in educational leadership. The remainder are in the process of obtaining their masters degree.
- All teachers in the core areas have a bachelor's degree that includes or has in addition to the bachelor's degree 12 credits in education coursework, or they are in the process of obtaining the degree.
- When the State legislature expanded the Parental Choice Program outside the City of Milwaukee in June, 2011, WRISA was the only accrediting association designated by the legislature to pre-accredit schools that responded to the needs of independent schools needing to be pre-accredited for the program. As a result, the Parental Choice Program expanded to schools beyond the City of Milwaukee.

Board Accredits 242 Schools

At the September 14th and November 8, 2011 meetings, the board of directors accredited **242** schools with a total enrollment of 56,720 students in grade K3-12.

In addition, the board of directors voted to 'Deny' accreditation to five schools that failed to submit required documents on time or failed to meet WRISA Standards. One school was dropped from Candidacy.

The board of directors is the sole authority in determining the accreditation status of a school. Its decision may differ from the "Recommendation" for accreditation made by a Visiting Team.

To view the complete list of schools, visit the WRISA website: www.wrisa.net after December 31, 2011 and click on the "WRISA Schools" link.

Schools Accepted into Candidacy

The following schools applied for Candidacy, met the WRISA pre-accreditation criteria, and were accepted as Candidates:

Carter School of Excellence	Milwaukee
Christ Memorial Lutheran School	Milwaukee
Holy Redeemer Christian School	Milwaukee
Lutheran Special School	Milwaukee
Mt. Pleasant Renaissance School	Racine
NOVA	Milwaukee
St. Alphonsus School	New Munster
St. Marcus Lutheran School	Milwaukee
St. Mary School	Hilbert
St. Mary of the Assumption School	Richland Center
Sherman Park Lutheran School	Milwaukee
Starr Academy	New London
Trinity Lutheran School	Racine

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 go to:

First Immanuel Lutheran School	Cedarburg
Mount Olive Lutheran School	Milwaukee
Our Redeemer Lutheran School	Wauwatosa
St. Thomas Aquinas Academy	Marinette
Trinity Lutheran School	Mequon

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 Visiting Team documents and Long Range Plan to the board of directors.

All Saints School	Denmark
Holy Angels School	West Bend

Holy Apostles School	New Berlin
Holy Rosary School*	Kenosha
John Paul II Academy	Racine
Our Lady Queen of Peace School	Madison
Manitowoc Lutheran High School	Manitowoc
Risen Savior Lutheran School	Milwaukee
St. Adalbert School	Rosholt
St. Bernard School*	Wauwatosa
St. Francis Xavier School	Cross Plains
St. Gabriel School	Hubertus
St. Gregory the Great School	Milwaukee
St. Jerome School	Columbus
St. Luke School	Plain
St. Margaret Mary School	Milwaukee
St. Mary's Visitation Parish School	Elm Grove
St. Mary School*	Kenosha
St. Mary's School	Luxemburg
St. Mary School	Platteville
St. Patrick School	Hudson
St. Peter School*	Kenosha
St. Rita School	Racine
St. Robert School	Shorewood
St. William School	Janesville

*denotes schools that conducted a Self Study and hosted a Visiting Team prior to going through a unification with other area schools.

New Members Join Board

The WRISA board of directors welcomes Patrick Lofton, representative for the Archdiocese of Milwaukee, and John Reetz, Representative for the Diocese of Green Bay

Patrick serves as the representative on the board of directors for the Archdiocese of Milwaukee Jurisdiction. John serves as the representative for the Diocese of Green Bay Jurisdiction.

The board of directors thanks Carol Ward for serving as representative for the Archdiocese Jurisdiction for three years. The Board also thanks Diane Walters who served as representative for the Diocese of Green Bay for four years.

Fee Structure to Change

Starting with the 2012-13 school year, the fee structure for annual membership fees will change.

Currently, membership fees are calculated according to student enrollment. The membership fee increases for every 100 students and caps off when enrollment reaches 600 students. As a result, the membership fee for schools with enrollments over 600 students is less per student than for schools that have less than 600 students.

Under the new structure, all schools will pay \$100 base plus 50 cents per student. For example, a school with 45 students will pay \$100 plus \$22.50 (45 students x .50) for a total of \$122.50. A school with 800 students will pay \$100 plus \$400 (800 students x .50) for a total of \$500. Some schools will pay less than what they do now, while others will experience a moderate increase. The membership fee will continue to be auto-calculated in the Annual Report packet once the student enrollment is entered on the third Friday in September.

Standard Quality Indicators Undergo Revision

The board of directors voted to revise several Standard Quality Indicators (SQIs). Changes will go into effect for the 2012-13 school year.

SQI 5.17 is changed to read: ‘Special jurisdictional requirements: Administrators and teachers fulfill requirements as designated by the jurisdiction with which the school is affiliated.’ This means that if a jurisdiction requires state licensure, WRISA will support that jurisdiction’s policy.

SQI 5.21 will be changed to an ‘essential’ quality indicator. SQI 5.21 will be changed to read: **‘***Financial Accountability: Administrator and the governing/consultative body maintain and oversee financial records, transactions, and statements through a recognized accounting system, and provide financial accountability to stakeholder’.** This means that schools are not required to publish an Annual Financial Report.

SQI 5.24 will be changed to read: ‘Administrator and governing body maintain a policy that ensures all funds that are raised in the name of the school, are used for their designated intent.’ This means that if money is donated or

collected for a special purpose, it cannot be used for any other purpose. For example, if a donation is given for student scholarships, it cannot be used to purchase computers.

SQI 5.25 will be changed to read: ‘The governing body ensures that current, comprehensive insurance coverage is provided.’ This means that the school must have active comprehensive insurance coverage.

Do You Know?

The Department of Homeland Security recognizes WRISA accredited schools that seek to enroll nonimmigrant foreign students under the ‘Student and Exchange Visitor Program’ (SEVP) and ‘Student/Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) certification process.

The Wisconsin Health and Educational Facilities Authority (WHEFA) recognizes WRISA accredited schools that seek low cost capital financing for new or existing construction loans. For information, go to www.whefa.com.

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

Board of Directors

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