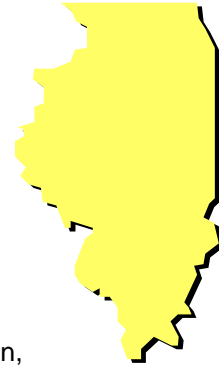


ILLINOIS



ACCREDITATION, LICENSING & APPROVAL

Applies to all private schools

- Private schools may register annually with the state Board of Education, giving their student enrollment counts, staff counts and other basic information. A school is registered when it has filed a “Nonpublic School Registration, Enrollment and Staff Report” furnishing evidence to ensure compliance with federal and state laws regarding health examination and immunization, attendance, length of term, nondiscrimination and fire and health safety requirements. Registration takes place each October through an electronic data collection system; schools registering for the first time submit their registration on paper.
- Private schools that have been registered for at least a year may voluntarily seek the status of “recognition” from the state Board of Education. This status may be obtained by complying with administrative guidelines and review procedures as prescribed by the board. These guidelines and procedures must take into account the diversity of private schools and may not impinge upon the noneducational relationships between schools and their clientele. It is intended by the state Board of Education that private schools receiving recognition be viewed by all educational institutions and organizations as having state-approved educational programs.
- Alternatively, a school may seek accreditation from a state-approved private accrediting agency. Schools awarded accreditation are considered state-recognized schools.

Applies only to recognized private schools

- To gain recognition, a private school must submit an application, school calendar and educational program description, and have an official recognition visit conducted by staff from the state Board of Education.
- A school seeking recognition must describe in writing its policies and its policy-making procedures; its philosophy, purpose and objectives; its method for developing educational programs based on its philosophy, special purposes and objectives; its knowledge of the educational and developmental needs of its students; and its desire to serve the educational functions for which the school exists
- Board staff members visit the school to validate its operations and programs. Upon review of the final report, which includes the recommendation of the board staff, the board grants one of the following:
 - “Full Recognition” to schools that meet the state’s criteria.
 - “Probationary Recognition” to schools that do not meet certain criteria, but whose deficiencies are not so serious as to deny continued recognition. This status is a warning that the school must make specified improvement within a calendar year from the date of assignment.
 - “Nonrecognition” to schools that fail to meet state criteria as determined by an on-site evaluation. A school receiving nonrecognition status may reapply within a calendar year after requesting consultation with board staff.
- Continued recognition is based on the submission of annual registration and annual applications for recognition. Schools are visited periodically to determine recognition status in terms of its progress in meeting its stated philosophical and operational goals and specified program objectives.
- A teacher or another professional staff member must hold a baccalaureate degree or equivalent formal education. However, a school may employ teachers or other professional staff on the basis of demonstrated competence instead of a baccalaureate degree or its equivalent. The school must identify and describe specifically the measure used to determine competency or equivalency in its selection of teachers or

administrators who have less than a baccalaureate degree or equivalent formal education.

TRANSPARENCY & REPORTING

Applies to all private schools

- Private schools submit health and immunization data annually, and are encouraged to complete and submit an annual "Nonpublic Elementary and Secondary Registration, Enrollment and Staff Report."
- Private schools should keep records on students enrolled, their names, birth date, place of birth, sex, parents, academic transcripts, test scores, attendance and accident reports, among others.
- If a student transfers from a public school to a private school, his or her academic records should be transferred as well. If a student transfers from a private school to a public school, the private school must send official records unless the student owes money to the school, in which case the school may elect to send unofficial records. Official records must be sent within 10 days after a student's account is paid in full.
- Every school must report annually to the state Board of Education the number of students who have received the necessary immunizations and the required health examination (see below) and the number of students who are exempt from health examination and immunization requirements on religious or medical grounds.

CURRICULUM & ACADEMICS

Applies to all private schools

- The school year must consist of a minimum of 176 days of no less than five hours of instruction each, or a yearly total of 880 hours of instruction.
- Private schools must teach the branches of education taught to children of corresponding age and grade in the public schools.
- Instruction must be in the English language.
- The following major educational areas must be taught in all Illinois schools: human ecology and health; human growth and development; the emotional, psychological, physiological, hygienic and social responsibilities of family life, including sexual abstinence until marriage; prevention and control of disease, including instruction in grades six through 12 on the prevention, transmission and spread of AIDS; public and environmental health; consumer health; safety education and disaster survival; mental health and illness; personal health habits; alcohol and drug use and abuse, including the medical and legal ramifications of alcohol, drug and tobacco use; abuse during pregnancy; sexual abstinence until marriage; tobacco; nutrition; and dental health.
- The state establishes minimum standards for foreign language instruction in ethnic schools. An ethnic school is a part-time private school that teaches the foreign language of a particular ethnic group as well as the culture, geography, history and other aspects of a particular ethnic group. State standards must seek to ensure that the level of foreign language instruction in ethnic schools is at least as high as the level of foreign language instruction in public high schools.
- Driver education programs must be reviewed and approved by the state Board of Education. They must provide at least 30 hours of classroom instruction provided by a teacher who holds a baccalaureate degree or equivalent, and at least six hours of behind-the-wheel instruction of a dual control car on public roadways.

Applies only to recognized private schools

- Recognized private schools must provide a program of instruction that facilitates student learning. This program of instruction must include the following components: instructional objectives; lesson plans; selection and use of a variety of learning materials and

experiences; organizational and instructional adaptation to meet student needs; multiple assessment strategies for measuring student achievement; and program evaluation instruments and procedures.

- The curriculum must place emphasis on the development of knowledge, skills and understanding appropriate to the student body in accordance with the school's stated purpose, goals and objectives. Elementary school curricula must provide learning experiences that include, but are not limited to, language arts, mathematics, science, social science, physical education, health, safety, fine arts and technology; secondary school curricula must meet state high school graduation requirements.
- Recognized private schools must describe the provisions they make for students of different talents, intellectual capacities and interests, as far as these are compatible with the special functions of the school.
- Recognized private schools must provide evidence that, upon completion of grades five through eight and prior to graduation from high school, their students have passed examinations on the Illinois and U.S. Constitution. Proper use and display of the American flag must be taught in all schools. No student may receive a certificate of graduation without passing a satisfactory examination upon such subjects.
- A program of professional development must be maintained to stimulate continued improvement of teaching and curriculum. Appropriate documentation of this program and activities must be maintained.
- The school and classroom climate must support student learning.
- Recognized private schools must foster an appropriate intellectual, cultural and social climate; promote growth in student leadership and social interaction skills; and encourage special student interests through a diversified and balanced program of extra-classroom activities.

HEALTH & SAFETY

Applies to all private schools

- Private schools must comply with prevailing state or local fire safety requirements and maintain written evidence of an annual inspection.
- Private schools must maintain evidence of compliance with federal and state health examination and immunization laws.
- Every student, teacher and visitor is required to wear an industrial-quality eye-protective device when participating in courses where potential eye hazards are present.
- School bus drivers must have a permit. New applicants must be at least 21 years of age; have a valid and properly classified driver's license issued by Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Wisconsin, Iowa, Missouri or Kentucky and held for three years; pass a written school bus driver permit test, a behind-the-wheel examination, a physical examination including drug and tuberculosis testing and an initial classroom training course; pass both state and FBI criminal background checks; not have been convicted of two or more serious traffic violations in the previous year, or of any reckless driving, DUI or reckless vehicular homicide offenses in the previous three years; not have been repeatedly involved as a driver in accidents, repeatedly convicted of offenses that indicate disrespect for traffic laws, or ever caused a fatal accident as the result of the unlawful operation of a vehicle; not have been found to be afflicted with or suffering from any mental disability or disease in the previous five years. A school bus driver's permit is valid for one year, and can be renewed by completing an annual refresher classroom-training course; passing an annual physical examination, including drug testing; and submitting an application for renewal.
- In compliance with state Department of Public Health rules, all children must have a health examination as follows: within a year prior to entering kindergarten or the first grade of any school; upon entering the fifth and ninth grades of any school; prior to entrance into any nursery school; and, irrespective of grade, immediately prior to or upon

- entrance into any school or nursery school, each child must present proof of having been examined. A tuberculosis skin test screening must be included as a required part of each health examination. Additional health examinations of students, including dental and vision examinations, may be required when deemed necessary by school authorities.
- Upon receipt of a written complaint from school personnel, the superintendent or other appropriate administrative officer for a private school shall report all incidents of battery committed against teachers, teacher personnel, administrative personnel or educational support personnel to the local law enforcement authorities immediately after the attack and to the Department of State Police's Illinois Uniform Crime Reporting Program no later than three days after the attack.
 - If private school officials determine that a student in attendance at their school has been listed as previously listed as a "missing child," the school must contact local authorities immediately.

Applies only to recognized private schools

- A recognized private school must identify and describe in writing how student services are provided for all enrolled students.
- Recognized private schools must be accessible to the school population, as free as possible from traffic hazards and distracting noise and functional for the instructional program.
- School buildings of recognized private schools must be clean and in good repair.
- Recognized private schools must have a crisis management plan to protect students and employees from injury.
- Recognized private schools must be in compliance with applicable standards for heating, ventilation and illumination.
- If a recognized private school provides food service, the school must offer a variety of well-balanced meals in accordance with applicable local, state and federal regulations.

MISCELLANEOUS

Applies to all private schools

- Private schools may participate in the state's Textbook Loan Program.
- Employees of public schools may be employed on a part-time or temporary basis by private schools, providing that such employment is in no way connected with or subsidized by their public school employment and does not conflict or interfere with the employee's public school duties.
- The school board of any school district that provides any school bus or conveyance for transporting students to and from public schools must provide transportation, without cost, for students who attend a private school, who reside at least 1.5 miles from the school attended and who reside on or along the highway constituting the regular route of the public school bus or conveyance. Transportation is to extend to and from some point on the regular route nearest or most easily accessible to the students' homes to and from the school attended, or a point on the regular route that is nearest or most easily accessible to the school attended. The private school must certify the names and addresses of students transported and when the students were in attendance at the school. If any private school students reside within 1.5 miles from the school attended, the school board must provide transportation to those students on the same basis as it provides transportation for its own students residing within that distance from the school attended.
- The school board of any school district that provides transportation for students to and from the public schools may, by agreement with the officials of a private school, provide transportation to and from activities sponsored by that school at times when the buses or other conveyances are not needed for public school student transportation. The school

board must charge an amount not less than the cost of the transportation, including a reasonable allowance for the depreciation of each vehicle used.

- The Chicago Transit Board may provide free or reduced fares for transportation to pupils who attend private schools.
- Parents without access to publicly funded school transportation qualify for state transportation reimbursement. Claims are filed annually by each private school on behalf of parents; reimbursement is provided on a per-student basis. To be eligible, students must be under age 21 at the end of the school year, be full-time students, and live either 1½ miles or more from the school or where there is a verified safety hazard.
- Any programs or services funded by state grants to promote scientific or computer literacy may be offered to private school teachers and private school students, provided public schools already have been afforded adequate access to such programs and services.
- Private schools may benefit from the state's Regional Offices of Education provided that public schools have had adequate access.
- Private school students may participate in driver's education classes offered at public schools. Students who wish to participate in such courses must maintain passing grades in eight courses during the previous two semesters prior to enrolling in driver's education.

Applies only to recognized private schools

- The attendance of students at recognized private schools must not be a barrier to participation in organized extracurricular activities or to acceptance by secondary and postsecondary educational institutions.
- Recognized private schools qualify for the School Safety and Educational Improvement Block Grant. Funds may only be used for secular textbooks and software, criminal history checks and health and safety mandates, to the extent that the funds are expended for purely secular purposes.



This list was compiled by the Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice based on publicly available laws and regulations. In each state we sought the assistance of the state's Department of Education in ensuring the accuracy of our information. However, given the enormous volume of relevant laws and regulations, some errors or omissions may still occur. The Friedman Foundation welcomes suggestions for corrections or additions to this list. For more information on the regulation of private schools, see "Fifty Educational Markets: State Laws and Regulations Governing Private Schools" by Friedman Foundation Senior Fellow Chris Hammons.