

NEBRASKA

Private schools may choose to be accredited or be approved by the state, or neither.



ACCREDITATION, LICENSING & APPROVAL

Applies to all private schools

- A school choosing not to seek accreditation or state approval for religious reasons must collect a signed Statement of Objection and Assurances from the parents of all their students, and file these forms with the state.
- Teachers in private schools that do not seek accreditation or state approval must either be certified; take appropriate subject-matter components of a nationally recognized teacher competency examination designated by the state Board of Education; or offer evidence of competence to provide instruction (such as transcripts or diplomas).

Applies only to accredited or approved private schools

- Applicant schools must be visited during the school year by a representative of the state Department of Education or a designated county superintendent to determine the school's compliance with state law.
- State law provides a detailed process by which schools may be cited for violations of state law, guidelines for how schools respond to such citations and consequences for failure to address such violations.
- Standards and procedures for accreditation and state approval must be based on private schools' program of studies, guidance services, the number and preparation of teachers in relation to the curriculum and enrollment, instructional materials and equipment, science facilities and equipment, library facilities and materials and health and safety factors in buildings and grounds.
- Accredited or state-approved private schools must employ teachers certified by the state to teach their assigned grades and subjects. A copy of the certificate or permit of each staff member must be on file in the school or school system's administrative office.
- Each accredited or state-approved private school having grades 10 through 12 must have a state-certified head administrator. Multiple schools may share an area or diocesan head administrator.

TRANSPARENCY & REPORTING

Applies to all private schools

- Each private school teacher must keep a record showing the name, age and address of each student; the county of the school district in which the school is located; and attendance data, including the cause of absence, for each student.
- When a student enrolls in a private school, the school must notify the student's family that within 30 days it must provide either a certified copy of the student's birth certificate or (other reliable proof of the student's identity and age accompanied by an affidavit explaining the inability to produce a birth certificate.
- Private schools must provide, upon request, a copy of their files or records concerning a student at no charge to any school to which the student transfers.

- Schools must flag the records of a student reported as a missing person. If another institution requests that student's file, the school maintaining the file must notify local authorities.
- The head administrator of a private school must submit annual reports to the state commissioner of education, as required by the commissioner, of the number of students who have dropped out of school or were for any reason suspended, expelled or excluded from school during the year.

Applies only to accredited or approved private schools

- The head administrator, head teacher or presiding officer of the governing body of each accredited or state-approved private school must submit a personnel report and a curriculum report to the state Department of Education every year. Additions of certificated staff during the year must be reported to the department at the time of hire.
- The instructional program of accredited or state-approved private schools must be based on a written statement of purposes and/or goals developed at the local level and approved by the local board of education or governing body. This document must be on file in each school building and each certificated staff member must be provided a copy.
- At least once every three years, each high school must conduct a follow-up study of its graduates.

CURRICULUM & ACADEMICS

Applies to all private schools

- Private schools that do not seek accreditation or state approval must have a sequential program of instruction designed to teach basic skills in the language arts, mathematics, science, social studies and health. State officials may visit these schools or require them to conduct regular achievement testing of students. Arrangements for visitation or testing must be made through a parent representative at each such school. Test results may be used as evidence of whether these schools are offering adequate instruction but may not be used to measure, compare or evaluate the competence of students.
- All private schools must have adequate equipment and supplies and must have courses of study for each grade substantially the same as those given in the public schools.
- All grades below sixth grade in all private schools must devote at least an hour a week to exercises or teaching periods for the recital of stories having to do with American history or the deeds and exploits of American heroes; the singing of patriotic songs and the insistence that every student memorize the *Star-Spangled Banner* and *America*; and the development of reverence for the flag and instruction as to proper conduct in its presentation. In at least two of the three grades from the fifth grade to the eighth grade, at least three periods a week must be set aside for the teaching of American history from approved textbooks, taught in such a way as to make the course interesting and attractive and to develop a love of country. In at least two grades of every high school, at least three periods a week must be devoted to the teaching of civics, during which courses specific attention must be given to the U.S. Constitution and the Constitution of Nebraska; the benefits and advantages of our form of government and the dangers and fallacies of Nazism, Communism and similar ideologies; and the duties of citizenship.
- The English language is the official language of the state.
- Each private school teacher must arrange and present his or her instruction to give special emphasis to common honesty, morality, courtesy, obedience to law, respect for the national flag, the U.S. Constitution and the Constitution of Nebraska, respect for parents and the home, the dignity and necessity of honest labor and other lessons of a steady influence that tend to promote and develop an upright and desirable citizenry.

Applies only to accredited private schools

- Each accredited private school must provide the following instruction annually for the grades it offers: for elementary grades, time equivalent to at least 1,032 hours; for high school grades, time equivalent to at least 1,080 hours; and, if kindergarten is provided, time equivalent to at least 400 hours. State-approved private schools must submit a report as to how they will use the required hours, but don't need to follow the state instructional requirements
- Accredited or state-approved private schools must have a ratio of students to certificated staff members of no more than 30 to 1.
- Teachers in accredited or state-approved private schools must participate in at least 10 hours of staff development activities a year.
- Each accredited or state-approved private school must have a library media area available to students during the entire school day. All library media resources must be properly cataloged, marked and shelved according to a standard classification system. For accreditation there are detailed requirements for the nature and quantity of materials in libraries.
- Each school must give a standardized norm-referenced test. Whole grade assessment must begin no earlier than grade two and must be conducted annually in at least one grade in each of the following three levels: grades four to six, grades seven to nine, and grades 10 to 12. Each school must prepare a written performance report annually that includes student performance and demographics. No public reports of student performance may be provided for any grades having fewer than five students.

HEALTH & SAFETY

Applies to all private schools

- Each private school must meet minimum requirements for health, fire and safety standards prescribed by state law and the rules and regulations of the state fire marshal.
- Private schools must conduct regular fire drills in accordance with such rules and regulations adopted by the state fire marshal, and must keep all doors and exits unlocked during school hours.
- Private schools must provide regular instruction on fire hazards and methods of fire prevention.
- Private schools must observe State Fire Day on the Friday before Fire Recognition Day with appropriate exercises.
- Any school board or governing authority of a private school may request assistance in establishing immunization clinics from the state Department of Health and Human Services Regulation and Licensure. Such assistance must consist of vaccines, serums and other supplies, services and guidance from the director of health and human services.
- Any company or agency that provides transportation of students by school bus and contracts directly with the pupils or their parents; the school board or board of education of the public schools; and the governing authority of any private school must provide each student who is transported in a school bus instruction in safe riding practices and participation in emergency evacuation drills at least twice a year.
- Any person operating a school bus must pass a driver's test and a physical and mental evaluation performed by a physician.
- All vehicles used for the transportation of students by private schools must be inspected by a mechanic before school opens in the fall and every 80 days during the school year.

MISCELLANEOUS

Applies to all private schools

- Any public school district providing transportation facilities for children attending public schools must provide transportation without cost for local children attending private schools. This transportation need extend only between the point on the regular public school route nearest or most easily accessible to the student's home and the point on the regular public school route nearest or most easily accessible to the private school.
- Private schools must follow state laws regarding the extent to which students of different grade levels can compete in interscholastic athletic activities.



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.