
Category II Non-Public School Accrediting Agencies, Rule 0520-07-02-.03

The Background:

The State Board of Education is tasked with approving non-public school accrediting agencies that may recognize Category II non-public schools to operate in Tennessee. Category II non-public schools are schools that belong to an agency whose accreditation process is approved by the State Board of Education. Approval of Category II accrediting agencies lasts for a period of five (5) years.

Each agency seeking approval as Category II accrediting agency must submit various materials in the form of an application to the Tennessee Department of Education for review. The agency's rules, regulations, and minimum standards must conform to the State Board of Education's Rules, Regulations, and Minimum Standards. Additionally, at least one school accredited by the agency must undergo a site visit from the Department of Education to monitor school approval documents and conformity with the standards presented to the state for review.

Previously the State Board had recognized nine (9) accrediting agencies. Eight (8) of these agencies reapplied for approval:

1. Association of Classical & Christian Schools, Inc.
2. Association of Christian Schools International
3. Diocese of Nashville Catholic Schools Office
4. Mississippi Association of Independent Schools
5. National Lutheran School Accreditation
6. Southern Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists
7. Tennessee Association of Christian Schools
8. Tennessee Association of Non-Public Academic Schools

The Catholic Diocese of Knoxville chose not to reapply as a recognized accreditation agency because all of their schools are now accredited by AdvancED (Category III).

Two new agencies applied for recognition as a Category II accreditation agency:

1. Classical Latin School Association
2. Christian Schools International Accreditation Services

All applications for agency approval were received in December 2018 and reviewed by the Tennessee Department of Education during the first few months of 2019. School site visits were completed by April 2019.

The Department of Education recommends the approval of the following entities as Category II non-public school accrediting agencies for school years 2019-2020 through 2024-2025:

1. Association of Classical & Christian Schools, Inc.
2. Association of Christian Schools International

3. Christian Schools International Accreditation Services
4. Diocese of Nashville Catholic Schools Office
5. Mississippi Association of Independent Schools
6. National Lutheran School Accreditation
7. Southern Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists
8. Tennessee Association of Christian Schools
9. Tennessee Association of Non-Public Academic Schools

The Department of Education recommends denial of the following as a Category II non-public school accreditation agency:

1. Classical Latin School Association (CLSA)

The Department is recommending denial because CLSA's policies did not align with the State Board's rules and regulations and CLSA declined to submit a policy packet aligned with Tennessee's requirements.

The Fiscal Analysis Impact:

T.C.A. § 49-1-212 requires that the Department prepare a fiscal analysis of any policy, rule, or regulation proposed to the State Board of Education. This item has no financial impact on an LEA.

The Recommendation:

The Department of Education recommends acceptance of this item on first reading. The SBE staff concurs with this recommendation.