



Indiana Department of Education

Dr. Katie Jenner, Secretary of Education

To: Indiana State Board of Education

From: Office of Accountability, Indiana Department of Education

Date: March 19, 2021

Subject: Third-Party Recognition Petition for the Accrediting Association for Seventh-Day Adventist Schools

This memorandum provides a summary of the information provided by the organization in the petition, as well as the Indiana Department of Education's (Department) final recommendation regarding the recognition of the Accrediting Association for Seventh-Day Adventist Schools (AASDAS) as a third-party accrediting organization.

Background & Organization Overview

Mission and Objectives: AASDAS is an accrediting organization whose mission is to "...evaluate the quality of the denominational institutions' programs and their implementation of the Seventh-day Adventist philosophy of education in order to foster the unity and mission of the Church."

AASDAS was founded in 1997 and serves as the denominational accrediting authority for all tertiary and graduate educational programs and institutions owned by Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) Church entities. It oversees all educational institutions operated by the SDA Church to ensure each institution operates in accordance with SDA standards and principles.

Member Schools: While the organization has over 1,000 schools worldwide, currently, AASDAS has 110 schools in the United States, including eleven (11) schools in Indiana.

Agency Personnel: In its petition, AASDAS outlines the process by which appropriate personnel are selected for school visit teams. Specifically, staff selections for each team are made based on previous experience, educational training, state or denominational education certificates, and expertise. In addition, staff experience based on the type of school seeking accreditation is also factored into the selection process.

Accreditation Process and Procedures

Review and Approval Process: AASDAS utilizes a six (6) year long accreditation cycle for its schools, regardless of whether they are currently accredited. Throughout the entirety of the accreditation cycle, schools are expected to complete several tasks, including annual progress reports, the development or refinement of a Continuous School Improvement Plan, a Self-Study report, and depending on the school's accreditation status, host either one (1) or two (2) visits



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from the visiting team. Accreditation statuses are awarded at the conclusion of the accreditation cycle, at which point the cycle restarts.

All SDA schools are required to participate in the accreditation cycle as a condition of being affiliated with the SDA Church and thus cannot opt out; as such, there is no formal seeking accreditation process. Rather, schools must first request Candidacy status from the SDA Church to open. Once granted, the new SDA school then operates for one (1) year as a candidate for accreditation, followed by an accreditation visit by the school visit team in the second year of operation. Prior to the visiting team, the candidate school is required to complete a Self-Study report, which addresses all aspects of the school's operation and curriculum. Once the visiting team arrives towards the end of the second year, they review the Self-Study report and utilize a four (4) point scale to evaluate the school's adherence to SDA education standards.

Expectations and Requirements for Approval: After their visit, the visiting team then reviews the results of the visit and provides a recommended status of accreditation for the school to the North American Division (NAD) Commission of Accreditation. The team has the option of choosing from four (4) potential accreditation statuses: Six (6) Year Status, Six (6) Year Status with a Mid-cycle Visit, Probation for either one (1) or two (2) years, or Accreditation Denied. According to the organization, this process typically takes around one (1) to four (4) months to complete after the accreditation visit. Once the visiting committee's recommendation is complete, it is then reviewed and voted on by the NAD commission. Provided the school does not receive a denial or probationary accreditation status, the school is then considered accredited and continues participation in year three (3) of the accreditation cycle.

Assistance, Monitoring and Communication: AASDAS maintains regular contact with schools throughout the six (6) year accreditation cycle. Schools are expected to provide AASDAS with annual progress reports, as well as demonstrate either development or refinement of their Continuous School Improvement Plan. AASDAS also provides more scaffolded support to schools on probation by working with them to meet any accreditation standard in which the school has been identified as deficient.

Accreditation Standards

Standards and Expectations: AASDAS maintains nine (9) standards which are grouped into four (4) major areas: purpose, plan, practice, and product. Purpose contains philosophy and mission; plan contains curriculum, instruction, and assessment; practice contains sustainable leadership, school environment, professional learning, and communication and collaboration; and product contains school improvement. Schools are expected to adhere to all nine (9) standards; should they fail to meet any standard, an improvement plan is generated to address the standard in question.

Evaluation Process: AASDAS expects member schools to participate in continuous school improvement throughout each six (6) year accreditation cycle. At the conclusion of the cycle, the school receives a visit from the accreditation team, which reviews their Self-Study report and



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bases their accreditation status recommendation on both the Self-Study report and the report from the site visit. The school is then awarded an accreditation status, and the cycle restarts.

Signed Recognition Agreement

AASDAS provided the Department with a signed copy of the recognition agreement and was awarded points accordingly.

Department Recommendation

The Department requires a minimum final score of 3 or higher for a recommendation to approve. After reviewing and scoring the materials provided with the petition rubric, AASDAS received a final score of 3.53 out of 4 possible points. As such, the Department recommends that AASDAS's petition for recognition be renewed for a recognition term of five (5) years.