



# Indiana Department of Education

---

Dr. Katie Jenner, Secretary of Education

**To:** Indiana State Board of Education  
**From:** Office of School Accountability  
**Date:** March 15, 2024  
**Subject:** Accreditation Petition for Stepping Stones Education Academy (Elwood Elementary)

---

This memorandum provides a summary of the information provided by the school in its petition for performance-based accreditation and the final recommendation from the Indiana Department of Education (Department) regarding the accreditation of Stepping Stones Education Academy Elwood Elementary (SSEAEE).

## **Background & Demographic Information**

Stepping Stones Education Academy Elwood Elementary will operate in Elwood, Indiana and serve students in kindergarten through grade six. The school operates strictly in-person. The school has been open for one year. They currently serve six students in kindergarten, who will remain enrolled until grade 6. SSEAEE is affiliated with Stepping Stones Behavioral Solutions, LLC which has many locations. Stepping Stones Education Academy has another school located in Indianapolis, which was given provisional immediate accreditation in 2023.

SSEAEE “strives to offer an environment that takes education beyond the classroom and is the least restrictive environment for all. The classroom at the academy is set up to optimize learning in a student-centered environment. SSEAEE strives for flexible environments where kids have access to sensory and fidget breaks to increase their attention span. SSEAEE sets the classroom up to maximize the learning day and teach in progressive ways to captivate students' interest.”

SSEAEE projects that it will enroll roughly 20-24 students in kindergarten through grade six during the 2024-2025 school year. Over the next five years, the school intends to increase overall enrollment as the current students move up to through grade six.

## **Operations**

**Facilities:** SSEAEE operates at 2032 South J St. Elwood, Indiana. The school building includes multiple classrooms to be utilized for whole and small group instruction by a licensed teacher, a teacher's aide, and/or Registered Behavior Technicians that utilize the concepts of Applied Behavior Analysis to teach new skills. This setting provides more adult supervision and assistance than a larger, typical school setting, which allows the students to be provided with more individualized instructions and daily living skills to be targeted. Facility is being scheduled for inspection by the Indiana Department of Health and State and Local Fire Marshal.

**Tuition:** Annual tuition, application fees, supplies/materials, technology and food service fees for SSEAEE total \$11,507.50 per student. SSEAEE indicated that it intends to participate in the Indiana Choice Scholarship program.



# Indiana Department of Education

Dr. Katie Jenner, Secretary of Education

**Staffing:** SSEAEE has an administrative structure where there is a principal and an administrative secretary for all attendance, parent communication, and disciplinary actions. The leaders of SSEAEE promote student learning through engagement, growing, community discovering, and differentiated learning. The leaders promote this learning through active involvement and providing ongoing training for all staff and their needs.

The staff at SSEAEE consists of a teacher who is licensed to provide instruction for K-6 in the state of Indiana and is also a Registered Behavior Technician (RBT). Additionally, there is a Board-Certified Behavior Analyst (undergraduate and graduate degrees in Special Education), a teacher's assistant (undergraduate degree, starting a graduate degree, RBT), and 7-10 support staff that all have RBT certifications. There is also a clinical manager who oversees the daily maintenance of the building's routines, scheduling, and communications.

## **Academic Programming**

SSEAEE provides an academic curriculum based on the Indiana Academic Standards. They use Foundations, Heggerty, Engage NY and Eureka Math.

Instruction is given by a licensed teacher with the assistance of Registered Behavior Technicians and a Board-Certified Behavior Analyst to provide individualized instruction within a smaller, more flexible learning environment. Students are provided with in-person instruction within small group sessions and 1:1 attention when needed. Each student is given modifications based on his/her individual needs.

Students will be instructed in English/language arts, math, science/social studies, and a variety of special subjects (art, physical education, music, STEM). Additionally, the students are provided with learning opportunities within the community to acquire new daily living skills within routines and generalized previously acquired skills across scenarios, and locations.

SSEAEE tracks student progress with the NWEA twice per year. Additionally, students are given the Foundations inventory placement (an assessment within the English/language arts curriculum being utilized), the Words Their Way inventory assessment, and the Equipped for Reading Success Comprehensive Assessment (targets phonemic awareness and fluent word recognition). SSEAEE assures that they will administer all required Indiana state assessments.

## **Department Recommendation**

SSEAEE has been in operation for the last two school years, with their enrollment growing at a reasonable pace. In addition, SSEAEE has plans for steady reasonable growth for the future. Based on the submitted petition and accompanying materials, SSEAEE has a fair understanding of the requirements of being an Indiana performance-based accredited school. Therefore, the Department recommends granting SSEAEE provisional state performance-based accreditation as a nonpublic school in Indiana.