MEMORANDUM
TO: Indiana State Board of Education
FROM: Office of School Accountability, Indiana Department of Education
RE: Third-Party Recognition Petition for the International Christian Accrediting
          Association (ICAA)
DATE: March 9, 2022

This memorandum provides a summary of the information provided by the organization in the petition, as well as the Department's final recommendation regarding the recognition of the International Christian Accrediting Association (ICAA) as a third-party accrediting organization.

Background & Organization Overview
Mission and Objectives: ICAA is an accrediting organization whose mission is described as "Our [ICAA's] purpose is to assist Christian schools in the improvement of education within its Christian distinctive by establishing an organizational witness to their credibility of performance, integrity, and quality."

ICAA was founded in 1985 and has served as an accrediting organization since 1987 and accredits schools across the United States.

Member Schools: Currently, ICAA has two (2) fully accredited member schools in Indiana, as well as 93 other member schools worldwide.

Agency Personnel: In its petition, ICAA lists its Board of Directors and their experience, as well as outlining the process by which appropriate personnel are selected for school review committees, including an ICAA Chairperson, Lead Evaluator, and members of the External Review Team, Review Committee, and the ICAA Commission for Accreditation. Specifically, each ICAA Chairperson/Lead Evaluator is assigned to a school by the ICAA Executive Director, who also is responsible for assigning members to the review committees based on their relevant experience and familiarity with ICAA's accreditation standards and processes. As a peer-review accreditation agency, all personnel assigned to review applicants are required to have experience working in an ICAA accredited school.

Accreditation Process and Procedures
Review and Approval Process: To participate in ICAA's roughly three (3) year accreditation process, schools must first be accepted as a pre-candidate for accreditation by demonstrating that they meet the association's Conditions of Institutional Eligibility. Once a school has been accepted as a pre-candidate for ICAA accreditation, it is assigned an ICAA Chairperson who then contacts the school to schedule an official school visit. Pre-candidate schools are encouraged to schedule the official school visit as soon as possible to allow them more time to complete the necessary ICAA accreditation requirements by the next annual ICAA Accreditation Hearings and Delegate Assembly Meeting.

In addition to the official school visit, pre-candidates must also complete the *ICAA Readiness Diagnostic for Schools* and email it to the school's ICAA Chairperson. The ICAA Chairperson then reviews the school's submission and collaborates with the school to "…develop and implement improvements as necessary and appropriate to ensure that the school has the capacity to achieve accreditation." The school then utilizes the Chairperson's feedback to revise

their submission and emails a final copy to their ICAA Chairperson and the ICAA Executive Director, who then review the documents and make a final recommendation on whether to advance the school to Candidate status.

Candidate schools are then assigned a Lead Evaluator, whose purpose is "…[to] assist the school in completing its Internal Review and preparing for the External Review (ER) visit, advising the school as it continues its work to advance to Accredited status," with the school's assigned ICAA Chairperson typically serving as their Lead Evaluator. The school then works to complete the various components of the Internal Review, including analyses of stakeholder feedback, student performance data, and other relevant data needed to complete the *ICAA Self-Assessment Guide*, which serves as the culmination of the school's Internal Review process. Once the candidate has completed the *Self-Assessment Guide,* the candidate hosts an External Review Visit by the External Review Team, who reviews the school's educational practices and compares their observations with the materials included in the *Self-Assessment Guide.* At the conclusion of the External Review Visit, the candidate meets with the External Review Team and receives an Exit Report, which summarizes the Team's findings.

Expectations and Requirements for Approval: Once the External Review Team completes its visit, it compiles the averages from each team member's reports and submits a formal report to the ICAA Review Committee at the Annual ICAA Hearings/Meetings. Following the review of the report by the Committee, the Committee will forward a recommendation regarding the school's accreditation status to the ICAA Commission for final review and action. If the Commission review determines that the school has completed the requirements for ICAA Accredited status, the Commission will award the school ICAA "Accredited" status. If the Commission determines the school has not met the requirements, the school will remain at Candidate status.

Assistance, Monitoring, and Communication: ICAA maintains regular contact with schools throughout the accreditation cycle, requiring schools to submit annual updates to ensure schools remain in compliance with ICAA accreditation standards.

Accreditation Standards
Standards and Expectations: The ICAA Standard set consists of Assurances, Four Domains (Cultural Context, Leadership Capacity, Learning Capacity, and Resource Capacity), and Standards in support of each Domain. ICAA utilizes rubrics and other metrics to score candidates and member schools to generate a final score, providing a holistic view of their schools. These standards are reviewed on an ongoing six (6) year cycle by the members of the appointed Standards Review Committee, who propose revisions as needed on the fourth year of the cycle. If the revisions and their rationale are accepted by the ICAA Commission for Accreditation, the revisions are announced to member schools during the fifth year of the cycle and eventually implemented during the sixth and final year of the review cycle.

Evaluation Process: Candidates for ICAA accreditation are expected to demonstrate compliance with all accreditation standards to obtain accreditation. Candidates with multiple areas of deficiency may remain as candidates until the deficiencies are addressed, while member schools found to be deficient during the school's annual update may be required to submit additional documentation as part of an accreditation review.

Indiana Department of Education

Dr. Katie Jenner, Secretary of Education

Signed Recognition Agreement

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

Department Recommendation

Each petition is reviewed and scored based on an established rubric where an organization may earn a score between 0 and 4. The Department recommends for approval a petition receiving a final score of 3 or higher. After reviewing and scoring the materials provided, ICAA received a final score of 3.55 out of 4 possible points. Since ICAA received a score higher than 3, the Department recommends that ICAA's petition for recognition be renewed for a recognition term of seven (7) years.