



Indiana Department of Education

Dr. Katie Jenner, Secretary of Education

MEMORANDUM

TO: Indiana State Board of Education
FROM: Office of School Accountability, Indiana Department of Education
RE: Accreditation Petition for Life Christian STEAM Academy (LCSA)
DATE: July 14, 2021

This memorandum provides a summary of the information provided by the school in the petition and in any submitted revisions, as well as the Department's comments regarding the accreditation of LCSA.

Background & Demographic Information

Life Christian STEAM Academy (LCSA) is a kindergarten through first grade school located in Gary. LCSA has been in operation for two (2) years as an in-person school (excluding virtual programming due to COVID-19), serving the community of Northwest Indiana. LCSA currently does not hold accreditation with an accreditation provider, nor does it hold any affiliations with any education organization.

LCSA describes its mission as "...providing superior Christian education consistent with Biblical principles, we partner with families and their churches to equip students for a lifetime pursuit of excellence and integrity under the Lordship of Christ. Within a safe, loving, and enriching environment, students will discover their individual gifts and talents; develop intellectually, emotionally, spiritually, and physically; and impact the world through their leadership, integrity, faith, spirit of excellence, and Biblical foundation". LCSA's vision statement is "...grounded in Biblical truth and academic excellence, we teach, train, and mentor individuals for a lifetime of learning, leadership, and service."

LCSA intends to serve 115-130 students in grades kindergarten through fifth grade for the 2021-2022 school year, but ultimately intends to expand to serve students in kindergarten through eighth grade.

Operations

Facilities: LCSA currently operates in a building located at 430 E. Ridge Road, Gary, IN 46408. LCSA has provided documentation verifying that the facility meets Department standards for student occupancy.

Tuition: LCSA indicates that their annual tuition is \$8,000. LCSA has indicated that if accredited, it intends to participate in the Indiana Choice Scholarship program.

Staffing: LCSA's current Head of School is Dr. Jeremiah Johnson. LCSA currently employs one (1) teacher who does not currently hold a valid Indiana teaching license. LCSA expressed that it intends to hire more teachers in the future. LCSA has provided assurances indicating it will utilize the services of an Indiana-licensed teacher to administer state assessments.

Academic Programming

Curriculum and Instruction: LCSA utilizes Eureka Math as its curriculum provider for math, HMH Anywhere for science and social studies, McGraw Hill Wonders for English/language arts, and Lucy Calkins as a supplement for writing, specifically for students in grades kindergarten through second grade.



Indiana Department of Education

Dr. Katie Jenner, Secretary of Education

In addition to assessments created by the school and provided by their curricular provider, LCSA also utilizes Aims Web, Dibbles, and Renaissance STAR to assess student growth and mastery in "...chronological and Phonemic Awareness, Sound Symbol Recognition, Alphabet Knowledge, Decoding skills, Rapid Naming, and Encoding skills."

LCSA has contracted with Jupiter Ed as their Student Information System (SIS) provider. Jupiter Ed is Indiana Ed-Fi certified with Ed-Fi Data Standards.

LCSA's main instructional philosophy is "...each child will be taught from a personalized learning path. We will use a curriculum as a tool to teach the child, but the formative and summative assessments[sic] of each child will be used to guide their individual instruction." After the Department requested more information regarding their instructional philosophy, LCSA added "...students will be engaged in grade level learning that is aligned with the curriculum standards. Differentiation will occur in order to meet the needs at all instructional levels."

As part of the seeking accreditation processes, LCSA submitted signed assurances agreeing to comply with all applicable legal standards and required processes for nonpublic schools as part of its provisional accreditation period and understands that its accreditation may be revoked if LCSA fails to meet any or all legal requirements while holding provisional accreditation.

Department Comments

- After reviewing LCSA's initial petition, Department staff identified several areas of deficiency with their petition and provided LCSA with an opportunity to revise its petition. After reviewing both sets of revisions provided by LCSA, Department staff noted that information provided by LCSA, including curriculum, assessment, and technology practices varied significantly between LCSA's initial petition and each subsequent response to the Department staff's identified areas of deficiencies.

Department Recommendation:

The Department recommends Life Christian STEAM Academy's petition for provisional accreditation be approved.