



MEMORANDUM

TO: Indiana State Board of Education
FROM: Office of School Accountability, Indiana Department of Education
RE: Third-Party Recognition Petition for The Society for Classical Learning
DATE: December 10, 2025

This memorandum summarizes the information provided by The Society for Classical Learning (SCL) in its petition and provides the Department's thoughts and final recommendation regarding the recognition of The Society for Classical Learning as a third-party accrediting organization.

Background & Organization Overview

Mission and Objectives: The Society for Classical Learning accredits nonpublic K–12 classical Christian schools throughout the United States and Canada. Accreditation applies to programs of education leading to a high school diploma. The Society for Classical Learning, founded in 2002, exists to advance classical Christian education by equipping schools to thrive in mission and practice. As part of this mission, SCL offers a comprehensive accreditation program tailored specifically for K–12 classical Christian schools. SCL's process emphasizes both qualitative and quantitative measures of school health, guided by standards and indicators and supported by robust Playbooks for governance, academics, operations, and advancement, all with the intent to ensure schools are offering a high-quality educational program to students.

SCL currently holds state-level approval in Arkansas (2024) and Missouri (2025). SCL is in the process of applying for recognition in Oklahoma, Georgia, West Virginia, and Iowa. SCL plans to apply for recognition in Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia as soon as they start accepting applications. SCL has entered into a cooperative agreement with the Middle State Association so that schools may be accredited by both organizations using their process and teams.

Member Schools: SCL accredited 18 schools to date and are scheduled to visit an additional 30 schools this year. SCL has not accredited any schools in Indiana, but are scheduled to review two this year, in Indianapolis and in South Bend.

Agency Personnel: SCL's accreditation leadership consists of a team of professionals devoted to classical Christian education. Their leadership team are President and CEO Eric Cook, Chief Operations Officer, Angie Copetillo, Director of Accreditation, Brian Polk, and Chief of Staff, Starrla Fowler. SCL also has a Junta Council of 12 members and 20 SCL Fellows that make up classical Christian leaders who have devoted many years to the classical Christian education movement.

Accreditation Process and Procedures

Review and Approval Process: SCL's process is as follows:

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1. Preparation

- a. The school builds a relationship with SCL through membership and engagement in events offerings
- b. Submit an inquiry and take part in a pre-screen interview
- c. Complete an application
- d. Review standards and indicators using Playbooks

2. Candidacy

- a. The school completes a self-assessment using SCL Playbooks
- b. The school hosts a campus visit
- c. The school receives a post visit PATHway to Thriving Report

3. Improvement Years

- a. The school takes part in annual follow-up meetings with SCL
- b. The school implements a plan for improvement
- c. The school utilizes SCL PATHway services

The Society for Classical Learning maintains a transparent and equitable fee structure for schools seeking accreditation. Fees are divided into three categories:

Application/preparation, candidacy/site visit, and improvement plan years.

- Application Fee (Year 0): \$600
- Preparation & Site Visit Fee: \$9,000 (split into two \$4,500 payments across the application and candidacy years)
- Accreditation & Improvement Fee: Assessed annually at $0.0014 \times \text{tuition} \times \text{total student enrollment}$, payable beginning in the candidacy year and each subsequent improvement year.

These fees cover administrative oversight, evaluator costs, accreditation reporting, and post-visit improvement monitoring. Importantly, all evaluator travel expenses are included in the fees; schools are not asked to reimburse for additional team-related costs.

Expectations and Requirements for Approval:

During the campus visit, to assess the standards and indicators, accreditation teams disseminate surveys, review submitted materials, and conduct focus group interviews. All interviews use carefully developed interview protocols. Additionally, the accreditation team observes classroom instruction and school liturgies and rituals. School facilities, where teaching and learning occur, are also considered. Teams carefully review and analyze the data collected from each of these methods to assess the school considering the standards and indicators, rating each standard as emerging, established, or thriving. The collection of this data allows SCL to support the individual school towards improvement.



Assistance, Monitoring and Communication:

SCL will meet annually with the school to review progress on key recommendations from the visit. Additionally, SCL will provide PATHway service recommendations—online cohorts/ workshops/seminars, specific events, resources, and consulting— that support the school in identified areas of growth.

Accreditation Standards and Expectations: According to SCL, in addition to defining classical Christian education, a robust framework for what a thriving classical Christian school embodies is also important. Schools must be aware of how their mission translates to the daily operations, culture, and academic life of the community. Therefore, to assist schools in this important work, SCL developed eight standards, each with ten indicators.

SCL's eight standards are:

1. Christian Commitment - Classical Christian schools align their educational philosophy and policies with their Christian commitments and intentionally embody those commitments in practices.
2. Classical Commitment - Classical Christian schools manifest the liberal arts tradition by their philosophy of education and harmonized educational practices.
3. School Culture- Classical Christian schools align their educational philosophy and policies with their Christian commitments and intentionally embody those commitments in practices.
4. Student Experience- Classical Christian schools have students whose daily experience reflects the classical and Christian commitments of the school.
5. Governance- Classical Christian schools exercise a disciplined governance model of leadership that focuses on long-term viability.
6. Executive Leadership - Classical Christian schools ensure that the executive leaders of the school possess the character, competence, and capacity to fulfill their roles.
7. Finances & Facilities - Classical Christian schools practice fiscal responsibility and align all their resources to serve the mission of the school.
8. Advancement - Classical Christian schools advance their mission by strategically cultivating meaningful relationships across all constituencies through a unified and integrated



advancement approach (enrollment, development, marketing communication, community engagement).

Evaluation Process:

SCL's goal through accreditation is to create a path to thriving by providing targeted feedback and resources. At the conclusion of the site visit, the team provides the school with a comprehensive PATHway to Thriving Report. This lengthy (25-30 pages) report includes observations and recommendations regarding the standards and indicators. The report also includes a consultant's corner where team members may provide additional individualized and tailored feedback that may not fall neatly under the standards and indicators. The PATHway to Thriving Report describes strengths and areas of improvement for each standard. Additionally, PATHway services—targeted resources (consulting, cohorts, workshops, etc.)—are recommended, and a path toward thriving is provided for areas designated as emerging or established. Post visit, if there are any major issues uncovered during the visit, the team lead will reach out to the school to discuss the best path forward. Within 2-3 weeks of the visit, SCL will send the PATHway to Thriving Report and summative survey results from the parents and faculty. Within a month of sending the report and accompanying materials, the SCL director will meet with the head of school to discuss the findings. Within two months of receiving the report, the school will provide a written response to the accreditation recommendation and begin working on a plan for improvement. Assuming the school is rated as established or thriving in each of the eight standards, the school will be accredited on a five-year cycle. Should the school fall within the emerging category for any of the eight standards, the school will be placed on a two-year cycle until they reach established or thriving in each category. At the end of the school's 5-year accreditation term, the school receives a re-accreditation site visit with the Director of Accreditation. The school's previous site visit report and progress made on previous improvement plans are reviewed during the re-accreditation site-visit.

Signed Recognition Agreement

SCL provided a copy of the signed recognition agreement as well as assurances that the schools that earn SCL will meet the required Indiana legal standards and will comply with the Indiana Academic Standards.

Department Recommendation

The Society for Classical Learning utilizes a well-thought-out and organized process for the accreditation of schools. The Society for Classical Learning's process is rigorous while providing valuable feedback to the schools. The Department recommends approval of The Society for Classical Learning as a third-party accrediting body in Indiana for a five year recognition term.