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 Islamic Academy of Kendallville (IAK)
DATE: June 2, 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 IAK.

Background & Demographic Information

Islamic Academy of Kendallville (IAK) is a kindergarten through fifth grade school located in Kendallville. IAK intends to open as a fully in-person school, serving the Muslim community of Kendallville. IAK currently holds does not hold accreditation with an accreditation provider, but is affiliated with MTI School of Knowledge, an accredited nonpublic school in Indianapolis.

IAK describes its mission and vision as "Our Mission at the Islamic Academy of Kendallville in partnership with students, staff, and our community aim to educate, empower, and challenge our students to realize their full potential as individuals and citizens of the world who develop a life-long thirst for knowledge. As well as deepening their understanding and appreciation of Islamic values and rich heritage. The Islamic Academy of Kendallville has a goal to provide an education to help students reach, maintain, or surpass grade level. We also plan to increase Islamic knowledge by implementing Quran classes, Islamic studies classes, and Arabic classes."

IAK intends to serve 75-80 students in grades kindergarten through fifth grade upon opening, but ultimately intends to expand to serve grades kindergarten through eighth grade, with a target student population of 200.

Operations

Facilities: IAK currently operates in a building located at 831 Commerce Drive Kendallville Indiana 46755. IAK has not provided documentation verifying that the facility meets Department standards for student occupancy.

Tuition: IAK indicates that their annual tuition is $5,500. IAK has indicated that if accredited, it intends to participate in the Indiana Choice Scholarship program.

Staffing: IAK's current Head of School is Danyel Thomas. IAK currently employs six (6) teachers, none (0) of which currently hold a valid Indiana teaching license. IAK has not expressed whether it intends to hire more teachers in the future. IAK has provided assurances indicating it will utilize the services of an Indiana-licensed teacher to administer state assessments.

Academic Programming

Curriculum and Instruction: IAK utilizes McGraw Hill as its curriculum provider for math, social studies, and English/language arts, and FOSS (Full Option Science System) as its curriculum provider for science. IAK has indicated that McGraw Hill's math and English/language arts curriculum are aligned to Indiana State Standards. For science and social studies, IAK states

"…The Indiana Academic Standards serve as a guide for the development of grades K-5 Science [and Social Studies] curricula for IAK." In addition to assessments provided by McGraw Hill, IAK also utilizes NWEA four (4) times throughout the year to assess student growth and mastery.

IAK has contracted with GradeLink for its Student Information System (SIS). GradeLink is Indiana Ed-Fi certified with Ed-Fi Data Standards, and IAK has indicated to the Department that it has capacity to produce and submit all required data reports to the state in an accurate and timely manner.

IAK's main instructional philosophy is "…the theory of Islamically-based education is centered upon the principle of Tawhid. An Islamic-based education is holistic, integrated, comprehensive and balanced. It strives to activate and nurture all the potentialities of the student: physical, intellectual, emotional and spiritual. The one goal of an Islamically-based education is to draw the Muslim closer to Allah (SWT) by inspiring him/her an awareness of obligations as a servant of Allah (SWT); adhering to, and promoting, righteousness. Islamic-based education encourages students to explore and grow, ask questions, and seek answers both within themselves and within the bounties and creations of Allah (SWT), while at the same time acquiring the necessary skills and knowledge to become productive members of society."

As part of the seeking accreditation processes, IAK 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 IAK fails to meet any or all legal requirements while holding provisional accreditation.

Department Comments

- During the application process, IAK initially listed another building it intended to use for the 2021-2022 school year, which per documentation provided by IAK, would have been under construction and renovation until July 30, 2021. When the Department requested more information on the anticipated timeline for these renovations, IAK indicated it intends to use the address provided above for the 2021-2022 school year instead but did not provide any documentation regarding the updated address. Without documentation, the Department has concerns whether the facility IAK intends to utilize for the 2021-2022 school year meets Department standards for student occupancy.
- IAK does not currently have any staff that hold a valid Indiana teaching license, nor did they provide information on how they intend to ensure they utilize the services of a licensed Indiana teacher for the purposes of administering state assessments. While the assurances signed by IAK state they agree to utilize a licensed Indiana teacher for administering state assessments, the Department has concerns with accrediting a school that has not provided a plan to meet this requirement.

Department Recommendation:

The Department recommends Islamic Academy of Kendallville's petition for provisional accreditation be approved.