

Why Does Accreditation Matter?

Colorado has few regulations for non-public schools at the K-12 level. No license or accreditation is required to operate such a school. The state government does not even maintain a comprehensive listing of non-public K-12 schools. How can parents verify the quality of a non-public school? Accreditation offers one of the best ways for parents to differentiate among the variety of non-public schools in their area. Many parents limit their school search to those which have demonstrated sufficient quality and stability to earn accreditation. Here are seven reasons for why accreditation does matter:

1) High Standards

ACIS schools follow a common set of rigorous standards that reflect the proven characteristics of good independent schools. Those standards are based on Principles of Good Practice of the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS). For detailed information see: <http://www.nais.org/about/seriesdoc.cfm?ItemNumber=147128>

2) Mission-Program Congruence

Accreditation by ACIS offers reasonable assurance that an independent school provides the character and quality of education claimed in its marketing materials.

3) Third-Party Accountability

The rigorous accreditation process of ACIS requires meaningful and comprehensive evaluation by outside experts who validate strengths and hold school leaders accountable for addressing weaknesses.

4) School Viability

ACIS accreditation offers reasonable assurance that the institution is financial viable, with effective leadership to maintain long-term stability. That's important, because school failures most commonly involve problems with governance and finance.

5) Continuous Improvement

To maintain ACIS accreditation, school leaders must demonstrate an ongoing commitment to school improvement. Evidence of that commitment includes: ongoing curriculum development and teacher education, effective two-way communication with school families, and the use of learning assessment to guide program improvements.

6) College Admissions

For students at the high school level, accreditation facilitates acceptance into college. Students from unaccredited schools have to provide additional evidence to show they are well-prepared for higher education.

7) Legal Compliance

Accreditation provides reasonable assurance that a school meets or exceeds relevant government regulations involving: health, fire, safety, sanitation, and other requirements.