

Kentucky Non-Public Schools Commission (KyNPSC) Background Information

Early Childhood Advisory Committee Meeting

Friday, December 7, 2018

The Kentucky Non-Public Schools Commission

The Kentucky Non-Public Schools Commission (KyNPSC) represents non-public schools in the state of Kentucky. Founded in 1993, the KyNPSC is made up of representatives from the following non-public schools in Kentucky—Catholic schools, independent schools, Christian schools, other faith-based schools, non-affiliated church schools, and homeschools.

The majority of non-public schools in Kentucky are accredited, and that accreditation is recognized by the Kentucky Board of Education to grant certification to those non-public schools. This certification allows non-public schools, their students and families, and their teachers to participate equitably in programs and organizations such as KEES (Kentucky Educational Excellence Scholarships), KHSAA (Kentucky High School Athletic Association), teacher loan forgiveness programs, and dual-credit courses.

In 2018, over 50,000 students attend 204 certified non-public schools in Kentucky.

School-Age Child Care in Kentucky Non-Public Schools

The majority of our non-public schools operate before and after school programs in addition to summer care programs. These programs are licensed in accordance with Kentucky state regulations.

Early Childhood Programs in Kentucky Non-Public Schools

In addition, many of our non-public schools offer early childhood programs, specifically Pre-K programs for 3 and 4 year-old students, as part of our elementary and K-12 schools. Many of these early childhood programs are accredited through various regional and national accreditation associations approved as accrediting agencies by the Kentucky Board of Education in Kentucky. Of those approved accrediting agencies, the following have developed standards and protocols specific to early childhood programs:

- AdvancED (Southern Association of Colleges and Schools – SACS)
- American Montessori Society – AMS
- Association of Christian Schools International – ACSI
- Association Montessori International – AMI
- Independent Schools Association of the Central States – ISACS
- International Christian Accrediting Association - ICAA
- National Lutheran School Accreditation – NLSA

The non-public school early childhood programs accredited by these approved accrediting agencies are also licensed in accordance with Kentucky state regulations.

We would like to seek your guidance on the following issues:

Kentucky ALL STARS

All non-public school early childhood programs and before and after school care programs that are licensed receive STARS level-one by meeting the regulatory requirements.

As many of our early childhood programs are part of existing elementary (PreK-8) or PreK-12 schools, under the supervision of a principal or head of school, and are accredited by reputable and rigorous accrediting associations that are approved accrediting agencies by the KY State Board of Education, we would like to discuss the ability for those schools to receive higher STARS rankings on the basis of their early childhood programs' accreditation. Many of the current activities in STARS levels 3, 4, and 5 are part of existing school accreditation processes.

Licensing & Regulation Requirements in Accredited Non-Public School Early Childhood Programs

Early childhood programs (PreK) in accredited non-public schools under the supervision of a principal or head of school are complying with at least two sets of rigorous standards—Kentucky licensing and regulation requirements as well as the standards of the accrediting agency.

These standards often duplicate one another, and the early childhood programs are housed in the same facilities as the K-12 programs.

How Do Other States Respond?

Other states have developed a process whereby the early learning accreditation programs by private school accreditors can apply for and receive approval of their respective early learning accreditation processes.

The processes that are approved are then considered by the state as providing valid indicators of quality for early learning programs. In those states, the early learning programs that are accredited by the approved accrediting associations, therefore, are automatically awarded a specific level in the respective state's QRIS rating system.

Moving Forward

We would like to work together with you to explore options to ensure the health and safety of our youngest students and see if there are ways to create a more seamless process between the Kentucky licensing and regulations and the non-public schools' accreditation processes.