



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. With minimal governmental oversight, 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 matters:

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: www.nais.org/learn/principles-of-good-practice/

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 of the school by outside experts who validate strengths and hold school leaders accountable for addressing weaknesses. Periodic evaluation of the ACIS accreditation program by the International Council Advancing Independent School Accreditation (www.icaisa.org) supports continuous improvement by holding ACIS accountable for compliance with the ICAISA Criteria for Effective Independent School Accreditation Practices.

4) School Viability

ACIS accreditation offers reasonable assurance that a school is financially viable, with effective leadership to maintain long-term stability. That is important, because problems with governance or finance are the most common reasons for independent school failure.

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 assessments to guide program improvements.

6) College Admissions

For students at the high school level, school accreditation facilitates acceptance into college. Students from accredited schools often receive priority consideration, while those from unaccredited schools must provide special evidence to demonstrate their readiness 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.