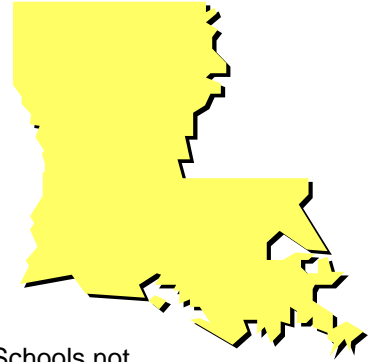


LOUISIANA



ACCREDITATION, LICENSING & APPROVAL

Applies to all private schools

- Private schools may seek state approval, but are not required to do so. Schools not seeking state approval must register with the state each year by the thirtieth day after the school session begins, submitting a signed letter registering the school year, the name of the school, contact information and the total number of students enrolled.
- The state Board of Education must appoint an advisory committee of private school representatives to advise the board on standards and guidelines affecting these schools.

Applies only to approved private schools

- To receive state and federal funds, a private school must be “approved” by the state. Schools may be “provisionally approved” if there are minor deficiencies in meeting state requirements, such as class size, or “probationally approved” if the school has more serious deficiencies, such as matters related to the credentials and experience of faculty and administrators. Each school is re-evaluated annually. A school that is provisionally or probationally approved for more than one consecutive year loses its approved status and its eligibility for state funding.
- Diplomas issued from approved private schools carry the same privileges and recognition as those issued by a state public school.

TRANSPARENCY & REPORTING

Applies to all private schools

- Each private school must maintain accurate and current information on students, personnel, instructional programs, facilities and finances, and must have procedures in place to ensure confidentiality and parental access to records.
- All private schools must cooperate with child welfare authorities and, within 30 days after the school term begins, provide records of each student enrolled at the school, including name, birth date, race, parents’ names and residence.
- All private schools must produce a written statement of philosophy and/or mission statement, which must be published and made available to staff and interested people upon request. They must keep this statement on file, along with goals and objectives for the current year and a plan to implement them. Schools must review the statement annually to see whether it needs revisions.
- All private schools must keep daily attendance records for all students, make these records available to child welfare authorities and report any unexplained, unexcused or habitual tardiness. Private schools that receive no government aid and enroll no students who receive government aid need only report the total number of students enrolled in the school by the 30th day of the school year. However, all private schools must verify to their local city or parish school district, upon request, whether a student is enrolled in the school and complying with state attendance requirements.
- All students entering a private school for the first time must present a legal birth certificate. Children born in Louisiana have a 15-day grace period to secure a birth certificate; children born in another state have a 30-day grace period. Local school boards determine whether a student may continue in the school upon failure to present a birth certificate.
- Any student who is a minor and is habitually absent or tardy must be reported to the family or juvenile court as a truant child. Private school students are considered habitually

- absent or tardy when they have been absent or tardy for more than five days in any month without parental approval and the private school has filed a written report documenting the instances and the results of school contact with the home.
- Private schools must keep the Social Security numbers of their employees confidential and may use them only when requested on official documents.
 - If a student transfers from a public school to a private school, the private school must notify the public school within 10 days of the student's enrollment.

Applies only to approved private schools

- The state reimburses approved private schools for the cost of compliance with state reporting requirements.
- Approved private schools must maintain accurate and current records of students, personnel, instructional programs, facilities and finances. Student records must be kept confidential.
- Approved schools must keep records of each student's progress and review those records regularly for instructional planning, student guidance and placement.
- A student transferring from an approved private school must be given credit for work completed at the former school.
- The principal of an approved private school may determine what course credits and placements to give students transferring from unapproved private schools and may require a student to take an examination in any area in which the student claims credit.
- Approved private schools must keep records of all state-purchased textbooks on hand at the beginning of the academic year. State funds allocated for buying textbooks may be used only to purchase textbooks from state-adopted textbook lists. Schools may purchase non-adopted instructional materials for grades K-3 that assist with gross motor skills, but may spend no more than 10 percent of the money allocated for textbooks on such materials.
- A health record must be maintained on each student.
- Each approved private school must submit an annual school report.
- Reports covering a student's academic achievements and progress as well as conduct must be provided to parents periodically.
- State regulations provide great detail on student-attendance policies in approved private schools, including the difference between absences and tardiness, minimum attendance requirements for earned credit and procedures for dealing with truant students.
- Approved private schools are entitled to receive, without cost, progress profiles on their graduates who attend Louisiana colleges and universities.

CURRICULUM & ACADEMICS

Applies to all private schools

- Secondary schools with more than 350 students must have on staff a full-time librarian with some expertise in library science.
- The state provides explicit guidelines for the awarding of high school credits in private high schools. A student must complete a minimum of 23 units of credit, including 15 required units and eight elective units: English – four units; mathematics – three units; science – three units; social studies – three units; health and physical education – two units; and electives (including a maximum of four credits in religion) – eight units.
- Electives in private middle schools are restricted to courses in reading, mathematics, writing, social studies, exploratory agriscience, exploratory technology education service, exploratory family and consumer services, visual arts, foreign languages, performing arts, keyboarding/typing, speech and computer literacy/computer science.
- Private middle schools must apply for approval to add elective courses. The application must include a detailed outline of course content, time requirements, detailed course

objectives and how they will be measured, qualifications of the instructor, when the course is to begin, the approximate number of students and criteria for enrollment. At the end of the year, if the course is to be offered again the following year, the school must send a year-end evaluation along with an application seeking approval to continue the course for a second year (and, if desired, a third year). After three years, the school may apply for permission to make the course permanent.

- A private school principal, headmaster or assistant principal must have a master's degree from an accredited institution or be certified as a principal on a Louisiana teaching certificate. Assistant principals who have held that position since 1992-93 are exempt from this requirement. The principal must be a full-time, on-site employee.

Applies only to approved private schools

- Approved private schools must adopt a calendar of at least 180 days, with at least 175 days of instruction. They must notify the state board if they are unable to meet this requirement because of an emergency or crisis (such as fire or flood).
- Approved private schools must maintain written policies regarding school governance and operation.
- Approved private schools must hold regular, planned professional development meetings for faculty and staff.
- Before a student graduates from an approved private high school, a certificate of high school credits must be submitted to, and approved by, the state Department of Education.
- The state provides explicit guidelines for the length of school days in approved private schools.
- Approved private elementary schools must devote no less than half of the school day to reading, language arts and mathematics.
- All teaching faculty must have at least a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution, with at least 12 hours of education classes, a major in the primary teaching field or certification in field they teach.
- No class or section may have more than 35 students, except certain activity classes such as physical education, music, art, etc.
- Approved private middle and high schools seeking to add electives to their curricula must submit the proposed course to the state Department of Education at least 30 days prior to the anticipated date of implementation. After assessing the course for three years, the school may apply to have it added permanently to its curriculum.
- Approved summer schools must comply with specific requirements regarding course load for students, teaching load for faculty, faculty and administrator credentials and awarding of credits. All summer programs must be approved by the state Board of Education.

HEALTH & SAFETY

Applies to all private schools

- Students must present evidence of immunization before enrolling in school, unless a parent submits a written statement from a physician explaining that the student does not need to be immunized or unless the parents object.
- Private schools must comply with state health and safety regulations and must maintain appropriate physical facilities and custodial staff to maintain a safe and healthy building.
- Private schools must create a child-identification card for each enrolled student, but parents may decline the card. Schools must use state-approved forms to collect the data for the cards and children must be fingerprinted by a state law enforcement officer.
- No person convicted of certain crimes listed in state regulations may be employed by a private school. Private schools may determine if employees contracted through other

companies to provide services to the school (such as janitorial or maintenance services) are eligible for school employment.

- Private schools may dismiss any teacher or employee convicted of any of a number of crimes listed in state law. The school may rehire these teachers only if a local judge consents or the original conviction is reversed.
- Any private school employee who suspects that a student has been abused or neglected must report this to the appropriate authorities.

Applies only to approved private schools

- Approved private schools must have a written emergency plan.

MISCELLANEOUS

Applies to all private schools

- Private schools that own or contract for buses may seek reimbursement for three-quarters of the state gasoline tax.
- Non-profit private schools are tax free, as is their property.
- Local school boards that provide textbooks and materials to private school students may seek reimbursement from the state.
- Private schools may request that the Department of Transportation place directional road signs to identify the location of the school. The school must pay in advance for the signs..

Applies only to approved private schools

- Private school students may ride on public school buses for free if they live more than a mile from the school and the school is within the local school district. Where no busing is available, parents may seek reimbursement from the state for travel costs up to a total of \$125 per student or \$375 per family per year.
- School districts may provide free busing to students who attend approved private schools and live less than a mile from the school, but the state will not subsidize the costs.
- School districts may not restrict bus access to private school students except for fiscal reasons approved by the state Board of Education.
- Fifteen percent of the appropriation from the state Education Excellence Fund is to be distributed on behalf of children attending approved private schools.
- Full-time classroom teachers employed by approved private schools may attend courses at public Louisiana colleges and universities tuition-free, up to six credit hours a semester, provided they remain teachers in Louisiana schools for the subsequent year.



This list was compiled by the Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice based on publicly available laws and regulations. In each state we sought the assistance of the state's Department of Education in ensuring the accuracy of our information. However, given the enormous volume of relevant laws and regulations, some errors or omissions may still occur. The Friedman Foundation welcomes suggestions for corrections or additions to this list. For more information on the regulation of private schools, see "Fifty Educational Markets: State Laws and Regulations Governing Private Schools" by Friedman Foundation Senior Fellow Chris Hammons.