

# Wisconsin Religious and Independent Schools Accreditation WRISA

## ACCREDITATION NEWS

*The Wisconsin Religious and Independent Schools Accreditation annually accredits schools that meet rigorous standards of excellence and demonstrate continuous school improvement.*

Volume XXII, December 2016  
Beatrice Weiland, Editor

### Board Accredits 256 Schools

At the September 8th and November 15, 2016 meetings, the Board of Directors accredited 256 schools.

To view the complete list of schools, visit the WRISA website: [www.wrisa.net](http://www.wrisa.net) after December 15, 2016 and click on the "WRISA Schools" link.

### Schools Accredited for a Subsequent Cycle of Accreditation

All Saints Catholic School, Inc.	Antigo
Assumption B.V.M. School	Pulaski
Blessed Sacrament School	Madison
Blessed Sacrament School	Milwaukee
Delavan Christian School	Delavan
Early View Academy of Excellence	Milwaukee
Lumen Christi Catholic School	Mequon
Mary Queen of Saints Catholic Academy	West Allis
Mother of Good Counsel School	Milwaukee
Nativity Jesuit Middle School	Milwaukee
Nativity of Our Lord School	Rhineland
Notre Dame School of Milwaukee	Milwaukee
Our Lady of Grace Academy	Racine
Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary School	Sun Prairie
Siloah Lutheran School	Milwaukee
St. Bernard Catholic School	Green Bay
St. Elizabeth Ann Seton School	Sheboygan
St. Eugene School	Fox Point
St. Francis Catholic School	Manitowoc
St. Joan of Arc School	Nashotah
St. Joseph Grade School	Dodgeville
St. Kilian School	Hartford
St. Leonard School	Muskego
St. Martin of Tours School	Franklin
St. Mary School	Bloomington
St. Mary School	Tomahawk
St. Paul Parish Catholic School	Bloomer
St. Thomas Aquinas Academy	Milwaukee
St. Vincent Pallotti School	Milwaukee

### Ten Schools Accredited for the First Time

WRISA welcomes the following schools as members. They successfully completed the Self Study and Site Visit processes qualifying them for accreditation and membership in WRISA. Congratulations!

Columbus Catholic Schools**	Marshfield
St. John's Lutheran School**	Milwaukee
St. Joseph Academy* **	Milwaukee
Ever Green Academy	Racine
Fond du Lac Christian School	Fond du Lac
Lighthouse Christian School*	Madison
Rock County Christian School*	Beloit
St. Joseph Catholic School	Boyd
St. Rose-St. Mary School	Clintonville
St. Mary's Grade School	Marathon
United to Serve Academy	Milwaukee

\*Denotes schools accredited mid-year

\*\*Denotes schools accredited by another accrediting association and seeking dual accreditation or changing to WRISA.

### Recognitions and Partnerships

The **Department of Homeland Security (DHS)** recognizes WRISA accredited schools seeking to enroll non-immigrant foreign students under the 'Student and Exchange Visitor Program' (SEVP) and 'Student/Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) certification process. As such, WRISA accredited schools are considered to be recognized by the U. S. Department of Education.

The **National Honor Society (NHS)** and the **National Junior Honor Society (NJHS) Council** recognize WRISA accreditation.

WRISA is a member of the **National Federation of Non-Public School State Accrediting**

**Associations (NFNSSAA).** This federation is composed of state accrediting associations that have a common purpose of promoting high quality non-public education for the families they serve. Together, they serve more than 200,000 children. The federation meets annually to share information relevant to their own state chapters and collaborate on common issues. ([www.nfnssaa.com](http://www.nfnssaa.com))

WRISA is approved by the State of Wisconsin to pre-accredit and accredit schools for the parental choice program. Currently, WRISA accredits over 85 parental choice schools and has nine in candidacy.

The Wisconsin Health and Educational Facilities Authority (WHEFA) recognizes WRISA accredited schools that are looking for low cost capital financing for building and equipment improvement, and expansion needs. This includes old loans as well as new funding. To learn more about financing options go to [www.whefa.com](http://www.whefa.com).

### Schools Accepted into Candidacy

The following schools have successfully met the WRISA pre-accreditation criteria, and have been accepted as Candidates:

HOPE Christian Schools: Fidelis	Milwaukee
King's Academy, Inc.	Milwaukee
St. John XXIII Catholic School	Port Washington
Valley Christian School	Osceola

### Benefits of Accreditation

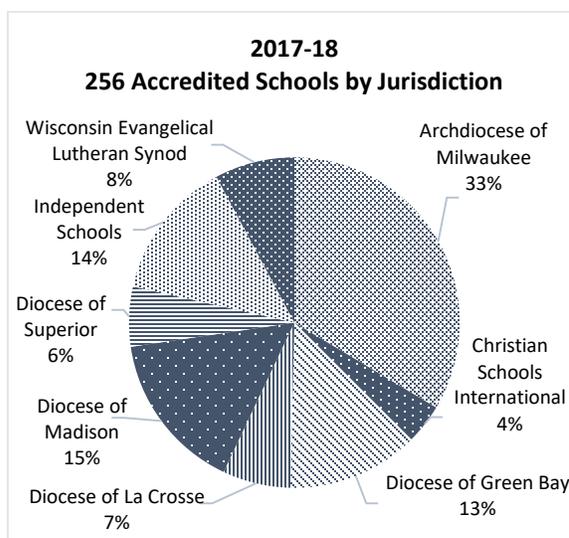
- Accreditation offers a framework for schools to conduct a rigorous self-assessment using a set of standards that are considered the standards of the industry.
- WRISA accreditation provides assurances to schools' many stakeholders including parents; prospective families; church leaders; state, national, and international government agencies; and education institutions.
- The Site Visit process provides schools with an objective independent team of educational professionals who validate the schools' own self-assessment and the

schools' adherence to the WRISA Standards with Quality Indicators.

- Accreditation provides schools with the opportunity to celebrate their successes and achievements.
- Accreditation provides schools with the opportunity to identify areas for self-improvement and growth and develop a strategic plan to accomplish their goals.
- WRISA's annual reporting process ensures ongoing accountability that schools are maintaining adherence to the standards and accomplishing their goals.

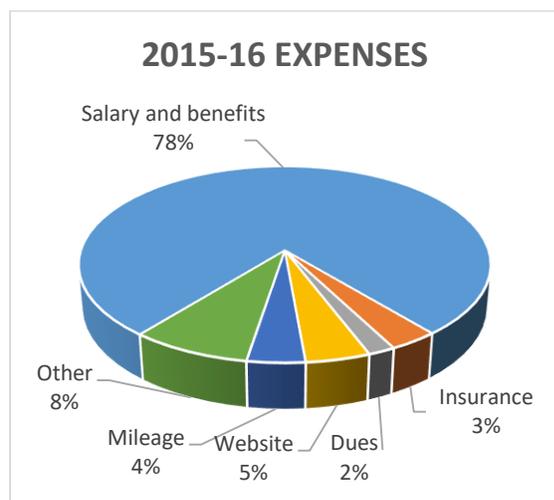
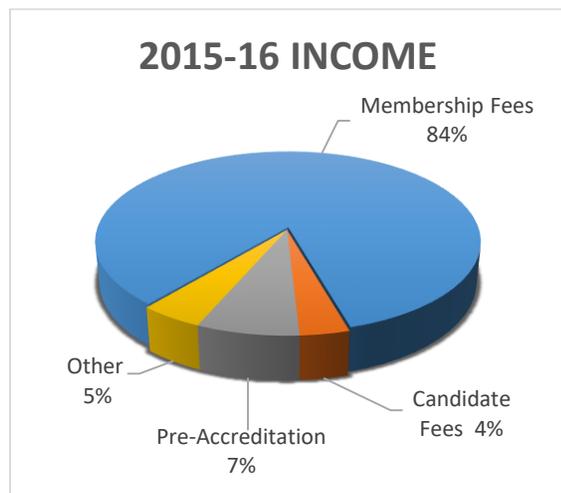
### End of the Year State of the Organization Report

Currently, WRISA accredits 256 non-public schools serving more than 53,000 students throughout the great State of Wisconsin. This includes elementary, middle, and high schools; and elementary through high school combinations. The diverse school communities include faith-based, independent, and specialty schools serving the needs unique to their student populations. In addition, there are 15 candidate schools with approximately 1,500 children enrolled. The smallest accredited school has ten or fewer students enrolled. The largest enrollment exceeds 1,900 students.



Annual membership fees account for 84% of the income. The remainder comes from candidate application and progress report fees, pre-accreditation application fees, and dividends

which go back into investments. Income is used to cover expenses including but not limited to: maintaining the WRISA office and website; paying insurance and professional membership dues, purchasing supplies and equipment; reimbursing work-related expenses; and paying wages for one part time employee, the executive director.



Besides accrediting schools, the WRISA Board, accomplished these goals during 2015-16:

- Revised the WRISA mission statement.
- Revised the Substantive Change form in the Annual Report.
- Revised Standard Quality Indicators 5.18, 5.23 and 6.12.
- Revised Parental Choice Pre-accreditation Criteria C and I.
- Approved Wisconsin Catholic Standards Self Study document for Catholic Schools and initiated process for transitioning to

paperless online reporting and storing documents.

Board goals for the 2017-18 school year are:

- Examine visiting team process, composition, and training as conducted by the jurisdictions to ensure integrity and consistency of the process.
- Hold a goal setting session for determining future goals.
- Conduct a training on the Wisconsin Catholic Schools Accreditation document.
- Review Standard Quality Indicators as they apply to high schools.
- Review Standard Quality Indicators and protocols as they apply to 'systems'.
- Create an online capacity for paperless Self Study and Annual Reports.
- Develop a membership/board survey.
- Review and update the By-laws.
- Develop and implement a marketing plan that will promote WRISA both internally and externally.

### 2016 Marks 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

November 2016 marked a significant milestone for the Wisconsin Religious and Independent Schools Accreditation (WRISA). 25 years ago the Wisconsin Council of Religious and Independent Schools (WCRIS) formed WRISA.

The WCRIS Board of Directors wanted to establish an independent accrediting association that would provide a measure of accountability to their own constituents and the public that would be affordable for large and small schools alike, and would be responsive to the needs of all religious and independent schools in the great State of Wisconsin. Thus, after much discussion, consultation, and planning, the Wisconsin Religious and Independent Schools Accreditation (WRISA) was born.

Through the efforts of the original directors and all subsequent directors, WRISA is one of the leading accrediting associations in Wisconsin providing an independent, credible, cost-effective service to non-public schools focused on advancing their unique missions and

supporting parents' right to choose a values-based education for their children. Celebrate with us!

### Quality Indicators Revisions

The WRISA Board changed the following Standard Quality Indicators effective for the 2017-18 school year. Changes are indicated in *italics*.

1. **Essential Quality Indicator 5.23** has been changed to: *\*\*Salary Structure: Administrator and the governing/consultative body annually prepare and approve a written base salary and benefits packages for faculty and staff compensation and communicate this annually to the employees in writing.*

(Onsite) written *salary structure*; written communication to the employee

2. **Standard Quality Indicator 5.18** has been changed to: Employee Handbooks: Administrator provides to all personnel a written, updated employee handbook which *must include* but is not limited to: position descriptions; family and medical leave; other leave/time off; sexual harassment; mandatory reporting of suspected abuse; non-discrimination statement; *student information* privacy; violence in the school/workplace; performance review/appraisals/evaluation; code of conduct/professional ethics; reduction in workforce/layoffs; suspensions; voluntary separations; discharge/termination; conciliation/grievance; and, *social media policy* (Onsite) employee handbook and/or published policies and procedures ~~written communication to the employee.~~

3. **Standard Quality Indicator 6.12** has been changed to: Data Decision Making: The administrator, in cooperation with the professional instructional staff, regularly evaluates the results of learner assessment, *formative and summative to improve curriculum, assessment, and instruction, resulting in student learning and growth.* (Onsite) documented changes made to the curriculum plan and the corresponding data which effected the change; *analysis of*

*assessment data; formative assessment results, summative assessment results.*

### WCRIS Leadership Conference

WRISA encourages its members to attend the Wisconsin Council of Religious and Independent Schools' 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Leadership Conference on 'Effective Supervision' at Country Springs Hotel, 2810 Gulf Rd., Pewaukee, WI on February 10, 2017.

**Keynote Speaker:** Susan Patrick, Technology Expert will address, 'Can Technology Save Private K-12 Schools?'

Susan is President and CEO of the International Association for K-12 Online Learning (iNACOL) which provides policy advocacy, research, and development of quality standards, and is driving the transition to personalized, competency-based, blended and online learning.

*This is Title IIA-eligible professional development. Register at:*

<https://www.wcris.org/professional-development/2017-wcris-leadership-conference-2/registernow/>

### Board of Directors

**John Soper, Ed.S. (President)**

*Associate Superintendent, Archdiocese of Milwaukee*

**David Schroeder (Vice-President)**

*Principal, Winnebago Lutheran Academy*

**Peggy Schoenfuss (Treasurer)**

*Superintendent, Diocese of Superior*

**Michael Lancaster, Ed.S. (Secretary)**

*Superintendent, Diocese of Madison*

**Helen Gilles, Ph.D. (Member-at-Large)**

*Consultant, Independent Schools*

**Kyle Heuver (Member)**

*Principal/Teacher, Randolph Christian Schools*

**Thomas Reichenbacher (Member)**

*Superintendent, Diocese of La Crosse*

**Sr. Kay Klackner, Ed.D. (Member)**

*Superintendent, Diocese of Green Bay*

**To be appointed (Member-at-Large)**

**Beatrice Weiland (Member)**

*Executive Director*

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