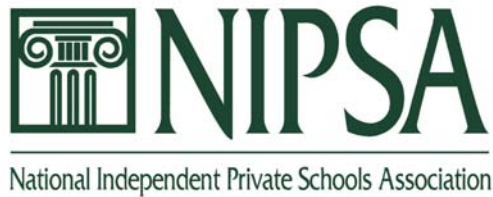




National Independent Private Schools Association

An Association of Academic Proprietary Schools

**An accredited Member of the
NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR PRIVATE SCHOOLS ACCREDITATION**



Thank you for your interest in NIPSA.

The National Independent Private Schools Association is an association of over 130 schools. Membership is restricted to for-profit, tax-paying schools, and there are two classifications of membership: Candidate Member and Accredited Member. A candidate member is a school that has joined NIPSA but has yet to undertake the accreditation process, and an accredited member is a school that has successfully completed the accreditation process. Fees for all are the same. It is required that candidate members proceed toward accreditation as soon as possible, and candidate membership is only allowed to continue for three (3) years. A school must be in the third year of operation (not membership) or later to undergo the accreditation process.

As you are probably aware, accreditation is an essential aspect of good school operation, and we are proud of our process. For all schools, young and older, the accreditation process is an extremely valuable learning experience. Each school conducts a self-study with its faculty and staff followed by a visit from a committee of member owners and peer educators. If the school meets our accreditation guidelines it is offered accreditation for five (5) years.

NIPSA is also a member of the National Council for Private School Accreditation an organization that evaluates and approves accrediting associations. NCPSA accreditation is your assurance that NIPSA is a highly respected and recognized accrediting organization. Through NIPSA and NCPSA member schools may also be able to obtain reciprocal accreditation with regional associations. Information about those organizations can be found on line at www.ncpsa.org.

Finally, NIPSA is the only organization that represents the interests solely of proprietary schools, and it is our goal to make this coalition stronger so that we can better represent our interests at all levels of government.

The pages that follow should give you a complete vision of our mission and determination to serve our members well. If you have any questions please contact me by phone or Email.

Very truly yours,

James A. Williams
Executive Director

**10134 Southwest 78th Court, Miami, Florida 33156 ● 305.630.2557 ● Fax 305.275.8881
email: jaws1139@aol.com**

MISSION

It is the mission of the National Independent Private Schools Association to promote and advocate for the interests of proprietary/ tax-paying academic schools and programs, and the students and communities they serve by providing quality services.

We exist to:

- Encourage the accreditation process based on accepted and published standards of excellence
- Recognize, encourage and improve the quality and diversity of private preschool, elementary, and secondary education and related programs
- Engage freely in all lawful activities and efforts that may enhance and advance these goals
- Provide a structure for the improvement of schools and programs
- Establish educational standards for such programs and provide an accreditation system to implement and maintain those standards
- Provide a source for consulting services, conferences, workshops, and news of mutual interest
- Establish an educational program to present our views and beliefs to the public and the educational establishment
- Provide mentoring relationships for those wanting to open private schools and programs and for those undergoing the accreditation process.

BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP

By joining NIPSA, you and your organization:

- Become members of the largest entrepreneurial educational accrediting and certification association in the United States, an organization that is itself accredited by the National Council for Private Schools Accreditation (NCPSA).
- Become part of a dynamic national organization representing only proprietary schools and programs and their interests.
- Become associated with organizations that value professionalism and subscribe to high standards of operation, including the NIPSA Code of Ethics governing proprietary program management.
- Gain a voice in national councils where educational policy is formed.
- Are kept abreast of the latest developments that affect proprietary organizations: pending legislation, laws and procedures affecting accounting, taxes, insurance, personnel practices, and other areas of operation. NIPSA keeps you up-to-date via newsletters, conferences, and regional meetings.
- Have opportunities to talk with other proprietors face to face and share challenges and successful ideas. Attending conferences and regional meetings not only gives you fresh perspective, but also fresh enthusiasm.
- Have input into shaping NIPSA programs, services, and policies, for we not only value your participation, but your counsel as well.

- Participate in the accreditation, self-study and evaluation process and experience evaluation by fellow professionals and representatives from peer schools and programs.

CRITERIA FOR MEMBERSHIP

NIPSA is comprised of owners of private tax-paying schools and programs in the United States that contain preschool, elementary, and secondary schools and related programs, and who are willing to support the purposes, standards, procedures and other requirements of NIPSA.

- Organizations shall meet criteria based on the following guidelines:
- Must be any individual or entity operating as a tax-paying school or program
- Must have legal authority and appropriate approval to operate
- Shall be an academic school consisting of any grades PK-12 or a related program serving young adults
- Are willing to meet all NIPSA criteria, pay all required fees and expenses, attend meetings, and provide information when required
- Shall agree to abide by and adhere to the goals and regulations of the organization
- Shall be of good character, and meet the membership requirements of the organization
- Shall submit written application, which includes grade span of the school or a description of the target population, population summary, tuition schedule and philosophy and goals of the program. A copy each of the promotional brochures or catalogue, and method of reporting client progress are to be attached
- The organization must conduct and submit a self-study of the total program, and undergo a site visitation by peers within 3 years of its acceptance into the program
- There are two classifications of membership: Candidate Member and Accredited Member. A candidate member is a school or program that has joined NIPSA but has yet to undertake the accreditation process and an accredited member is a school that has successfully completed the accreditation process.

NATIONAL ACCREDITATION

NIPSA is dedicated to the accreditation process, and as such requires all members to seek accreditation within three years of becoming a member. An *“Accredited Member”* is a status of membership that indicates the program is accomplishing its stated goals and objectives within the framework of its philosophy and has given evidence that it is committed to continued growth and the pursuit of excellence. Requirements for Accredited Membership are:

The organization must currently be a Candidate Member in good standing (including payment of all dues and assessments fees).

Academic schools must complete a self-study of the total program, including:

- A General Description of the School
- Philosophy and Goals

- Organization and Leadership
- Curriculum, Instruction and Learning
- Student Activities
- School Staff
- Parent Community
- School Plant and Safety
- Finances
- Current School Improvement Plan
- Boarding School Criteria (Boarding only)
- *Early Childhood Programs*
- Special Needs Schools

A visiting committee must perform a site visitation to verify the self-study and to take recommendations to the Board of Directors, which comprises the accreditation committee

The Board of Directors must approve the recommendations and commendations of the visiting committee

Accredited members shall file an interim report on the recommendations of the self-study

BENEFITS OF ACCREDITATION

Accreditation is evidence that a school has gone through a process of self-study and peer evaluation to provide evidence to its community of its legitimacy. By voluntarily undergoing this rigorous experience the school attests to its patrons its commitment to educational excellence.

Benefits of accreditation are:

- Recognition by the general public, by peers and by other educational entities of the school's academic excellence
- Involvement in a national organization that assists owner-operated schools to establish standards of credibility and performance
- Receiving mentorship in the self-study and evaluation process and serving as a mentor to others
- Creation of a school improvement plan that will give direction to the school community in future years
- Recognition by the Department of Homeland Security as a school eligible to accept foreign students
- Earning the opportunity to become accredited by additional accrediting agencies through NIPSA's membership in the National Council for Private School Accreditation
- Joining a cohort of other accredited schools through which valuable information can be exchanged

CRITERIA FOR ACCREDITATION

A school shall be evaluated on the basis of the degree to which it is accomplishing its purposes and functions as outlined in its own statement of objectives and on the appropriateness of those purposes and functions for an institution of its type.

In addition, to qualify for accreditation, a school must give evidence of adequately meeting the following criteria that are established as a general guideline to determine the effectiveness of a school's educational program and services.

The school shall have:

General Data

Current statistical information is provided that describes the school and its plant, its community and the student body.

Philosophy and Goals

There is a statement of philosophy approved by the governing body of the school. Goals and objectives, consistent with the philosophy, shall be systematically developed and reviewed by the administration and staff, and are to be shared often with the students and parent community. There shall be a continual evaluation of progress toward these goals and objectives. An annual report should be filed each year as well as an interim report during the fourth year of accreditation.

Organization

There must be a clearly defined and demonstrably organizational structure whereby these goals and objectives are carried out. This structure should specify the functions of the administration, staff and students, the administrative relationship among these groups, and the limits of authority and responsibility.

Curriculum

The written program provides a curriculum guide consisting of course descriptions and objectives that offer all students courses of instruction that are consistent with the schools philosophy and objective and with the students' needs, abilities, and interests. There shall be adequate instructional resources to implement the curricular program. The curriculum must be the object of continual evaluation and development by faculty, students and administration. This evaluation should be part of each annual and interim report.

Instruction and Learning

The instructional program addresses the needs of all students, emphasizes active learning, and provides teachers and students with ample materials.

Pupil Services and Activities

Services: Pupil services identify the need, interests, aptitude and goals of all its students and provide these students with adequate educational, personal, social and career guidance.

Activities: Appropriate student activity offerings supplement the formal and informal instruction of the school. These should be responsive to the students' needs and shall draw upon special skills and enthusiasm among students and faculty alike.

School Staff

The school has a well-qualified staff of sufficient number to effectively fulfill its responsibilities. Faculty members should have a four-year college degree as a minimum. A degreed faculty member should directly supervise non-degreed personnel.

Parent Community

A supportive parent community exists that is encouraged to share its ideas and recommendations and, when invited to, actively participates in prescribed areas of the school's activities.

School Plant

The school plant and physical facilities enable the staff to effectively implement the school program. All science equipment should be housed in locked, enclosed cabinets. All cleaning supplies must be out of the reach of students. All school plants must be in compliance with all state and federal laws, and must adhere to all fire and safety codes and regulations of the community in which they are located.

Finance

Continuing financial support is adequate to provide staff, physical facilities, instructional resources, and other support services necessary to operate an effective educational program. Budgetary planning should involve those who are responsible for implementing the school program and services. All personnel should be covered by liability insurance.

Boarding Schools

As life in a boarding school is integral to the overall development of the student, the aspects of that life must be evaluated as part of the entire student experience. The school must exhibit that care has been taken to plan for and implement policies that provide for the affective development of the child in his or her relationships with adults and other students.

School Improvement

As part of the self-study the school will prepare a school improvement plan (SIP). The school improvement committee shall represent the school community and may employ a model that is appropriate for the school and its mission. The plan should analyze data from the self-study and other sources to determine the present state of the school and to develop objectives and action plans to improve student learning.

Early Childhood Programs

In addition to the criteria described in the preceding sections, the following criteria, particular to early childhood programs, will be observed. Schools should keep in mind that in many communities law often dictates additional requirements for early childhood education. In addition, schools must meet all local, state and national requirements that may apply to their individual circumstances, and the school must also meet any state requirements for early childhood programs if the school is participating in a state-supported program.

Special Needs Schools

Special Needs schools are those schools whose mission, objective, student population and goals require substantially different curriculum and instructional strategies. These may include schools for exceptional education of all kinds. Schools must be governed by the NIPSA accreditation criteria as outlined in Sections 1-13 of the *NIPSA Accreditation Manual, Directions for the School*. In addition, schools must adhere to all local, state and national requirements that may apply to their operation.

Criteria for Therapeutic Certification

Certification is a separate process with separate criteria and standards. Certification is required of those schools that describe themselves as therapeutic or that are offering a therapeutic program. In addition to the academic accreditation requirements therapeutic schools and programs must also show evidence that the following criteria have been met:

- A philosophy of the therapeutic program, if it differs from the academic philosophy of the school, is described.
 - There is a description of all therapies employed, how treatment is documented and recorded, reporting procedures and transitioning policies.
 - There are description of the criteria for selecting, mentoring and training individuals who interact directly or indirectly with clients.
 - If the institution has been certified or accredited by other accrediting or certifying bodies, proof and duration of the accreditation or certification must be provided.
 - Evidence that the medical needs other than therapy is also provided and is effective.
 - Evidence of self-evaluation and evaluation by stakeholders is clear, and a strategic, long-range or institutional improvement plan has been developed and is provided.
 - Proper office policies are demonstrated.
 - The institution must provide any unique housing requirements that are indicated for this population and that are different or in addition to those reported in the academic accreditation report.
- *In most cases, accreditation or certification by JCAHO, COA or CARF may be accepted by NIPSA as meeting the certification requirements.



APPLICATION FOR CANDIDACY

All Programs (Academic and/or Certification Programs and Emotional Growth Programs)

This is our request for Candidacy Status in the National Independent Private Schools Association Accreditation and Certification Program.

Date: _____

Name of Organization: _____

Name of Program if different from above: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: () _____ Fax: _____

Email: _____ Web Site: _____

We are applying for:

- Academic Accreditation
- Therapeutic Certification
- Both
- Emotional Growth or Adult Program

If the program/school is academically accredited by one of the following accrediting association or agencies please indicate:

- An agency or association that is a member of the NCPSA (See list on page 4)
- The Middle States Association of Commission on Elementary and Secondary Schools
- For therapeutic schools and programs - CARF, COA or The Joint Commission (Formerly JAHCO)
- Other (Please give name) _____

If the school is accredited by an association or agency approved by NIPSA are you applying for dual or reciprocal accreditation? Yes No If yes, please give the date of the school's initial accreditation and the expiration date.

Initial Accreditation: ____/____/20__ Expiration date: ____/____/20__

If your school is not accredited or certified at this time, but you are seeking accreditation or certification with another agency, please indicate in what year you anticipate accreditation or certification and the name of the agency: _____ Agency

_____ Date: ____/____/20__

Choose YES or NO for each item:

- | YES | NO | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 1. The school/organization has legal authority to operate in its state. (All documents relating to local, state and federal regulations governing the operation of the school/program must be attached.) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 2. The owner or representative is the chief administrative officer of the school/organization and is properly prepared to direct and manage the school/organization. (Attach qualifications.) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 3. The school/organization has been in operation for two (2) years with enrolled students or clients. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 4. The school/organization has a written statement of its mission and goals, and a statement of non-discrimination. (Attach documentation.) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 5. The school/organization can demonstrate its ability to provide |

- appropriate resources for fulfilling its purposes.
- 6. The professional expertise of each staff member is demonstrated through one or more of the following criteria:
 - a. Holds appropriate qualifying certificates.
 - b. Has a baccalaureate or higher degree from an accredited or recognized college.
 - c. If not meeting one or both of the above, must have a letter in his or her permanent record with documentation why he or she is especially or uniquely qualified in the assignment.
 - d. The therapeutic staff is fully qualified for the roles they have been assigned.
 - 7. The school or organization has adequate materials and facilities to fulfill its mission.
 - 8. The owner or designated representative has expressed in writing his or her organization's (or school's) intent to be accredited and/or certified by NIPSA.
 - 9. The school or organization, by completing this Candidacy Form, is willing to comply with all accreditation fees and expenses; provide necessary information to NIPSA and official representatives as they fulfill the accreditation process; and shall allow its accreditation status to be published or otherwise known to other agencies, institutions or individuals. (Fee schedule attached)
 - 10. The applicant acknowledges that membership or accreditation can be cancelled if in the opinion of the NIPSA board of directors the school or organization has violated a law or has not met the standards of ethical conduct as established in the NIPSA Code of Conduct (attached).

NOTE: If you marked "N" (No) for any item on any item on page 1 and 2, please call the NIPSA National Office at 305-630-2557 for clarification or provide an explanation on a separate sheet of paper.

If you need extra room to complete any of the following items, please do answer on a separate sheet of paper and specific the Item number.

11. Please describe your program. If you have an academic component, please mark (x) in the appropriate boxes below for grade levels offered at your school:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Preschool	<input type="checkbox"/>	Elementary Through Grade 8
<input type="checkbox"/>	4 Year Old Kindergarten	<input type="checkbox"/>	Middle School/ Jr. High School 6-8
<input type="checkbox"/>	5 Year Old Kindergarten	<input type="checkbox"/>	Secondary School 9-12
<input type="checkbox"/>	Elementary Through Grade 6	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (Please Describe) _____

12. If you are applying for therapeutic certification please indicate the level for which you are applying: Level I Level II Level III Level IV (See page 4 for description of levels)

13. If your school is an emotional growth or adult program please describe the activities or educational component of your school and how they are implemented. (Please do this on a separate sheet or attach your program description materials, i.e. brochure, promotion book, etc.)

Total School/Program Enrollment ____ Date School/Program Established: Date: ____/____/20____

14. Is the school or organization established as a for profit entity (Answer must be yes)?

Yes No

Describe the school or program's organization (For-Profit Corporation, For-Profit LLC, sole proprietorship, etc.):

15. Do you use a specific curriculum or system in your academic or therapeutic program? (ie. Montessori, etc.)

Yes No N/A If yes, please specify

16. Do you anticipate a curriculum or program change in the future? Yes No

N/A

If yes, please describe the changes you will be making:

17. Is your school approved, accredited or certified by the state? Yes No

18. Professional References (provide 2)

Name	Address	City	State and Zip	Telephone
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20. I have read the membership and fee requirements of the National Independent Private Schools Association (NIPSA) and I agree to maintain my membership and/or candidacy in good standing. I certify that this school or program is a privately owned, for-profit, tax-paying entity. I also acknowledge that I must apply for accreditation and certification, conduct a self-study and undergo a site visitation by a team of my peers within three (3) years of becoming accepted for candidacy. This Application for Candidacy submitted to the National Independent Private Schools Association is a true representation of our proprietary school or organization. I have read all of the eligibility requirements and the fee schedule. I understand that this letter and application are only the beginning of the process. Application fee of \$350.00 must accompany this application.

Name of Owner (Please Print)

Date: ____ / ____ / 20 ____

Signature of Owner

If not School Owner Designated Representative (Please print):

Name _____ Title _____

Date: ____ / ____ / 20 ____

Authorized Signature:

Please initial each page.

Please include copies of your brochures and other information provided to prospective patrons.

THERAPEUTIC PROGRAM LEVELS

Level I: Counseling and guidance are provided as part of the program on an as needed basis and may be provided on-site or by outside referrals.

Level II: Clinicians are provided for students identified as in need of counseling or therapy. Sessions are conducted at least weekly on site and may be group or individual.

Level III: Regular therapy is part of the ongoing program and is a requirement for ALL of the students in the school. Sessions are conducted at least weekly and as needed, may be group or individual, and are conducted on site.

Level IV: Regular ongoing intensive treatment is provided at least daily and as needed. Psychiatric care, including evaluation and medication management is provided at least monthly by the staff psychiatrist.

MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS – NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR PRIVATE SCHOOL ACCREDITATION

Accrediting Association of Seventh-Day Adventist Schools, Colleges & Universities
Alabama Independent School Association
American Montessori Society
Association of Christian Schools International Association of Christian Teachers and Schools – Assembly of God
Association of Independent Schools of Florida
Association of Waldorf Schools of North America
Christian School International
Christian Schools of Florida
Florida Association of Christian Colleges and Schools
Florida Catholic Conference
Kentucky Nonpublic School Commission
National Association Board of Merkos L’Inyonei Chinuch
National Christian Schools Association
National Independent Private Schools Association
North American Christian School Accrediting Association
Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod School Accreditation

SCHEDULE OF FEES

CANDIDACY

Application Fee for Regular or Distance Academic Schools or Therapeutic Programs	\$350.00
Application Fee for <u>Both</u> Academic Accreditation and Therapeutic Certification	\$650.00

ANNUAL DUES AND ASSESSMENT (ACADEMIC, ONLINE AND VIRTUAL SCHOOLS)

CANDIDATE AND ACCREDITED SCHOOLS

	<u>REGULAR ACADEMIC SCHOOLS</u>	<u>ONLINE AND VIRTUAL SCHOOLS</u>
Dues	\$550.00	\$1000.00 each site
Dues for Additional Sites	\$100.00 per site	
Student Assessment	\$2.00 Per Student for first 1000, \$1.00 thereafter to 3500 students maximum	NONE

(Dues and assessment are payable October 1st each year for the current school year. Late fee is \$100.00.)

New schools admitted to candidacy prior to March 1st must pay full dues and assessments for the current school year. Schools admitted to candidacy after March 1st must pay half the dues and assessment for the current school year.

ANNUAL DUES (THERAPEUTIC SCHOOLS AND EMOTIONAL GROWTH PROGRAMS)

(Therapeutic dues are in addition to academic school dues)

CANDIDATE AND CERTIFIED SCHOOLS

Dues \$1000.00

(Dues are payable October 1st each year for the current school year)

(Dues for Schools in both programs are \$1600.00 plus \$2.00 per student per year plus \$100.00 for each additional site)

CHARGES FOR THE ACCREDITATION AND CERTIFICATION PROCESSES

Regular academic and distance education schools are accredited for a period of seven (7) years. The fee for accreditation is \$1200.00 per organization. There is no charge for additional sites.

Therapeutic schools and programs are accredited and certified for a period of five (5) years. The accreditation fee is \$850.00.

The certification fees are: Level I - \$975.00 • Level II — \$1250.00 • Level III - \$1500.00 • Level IV - \$1750.00.

There is no charge for additional sites.

All NIPSA schools and programs (if an academic program is offered) are required to undergo the academic accreditation process within three (3) years of becoming a candidate. Schools and programs that describe themselves as therapeutic are also required to undergo the therapeutic certification process within three (3) years of becoming a candidate school.

Schools or programs that have both academic and therapeutic programs must undergo both academic accreditation and therapeutic certification. Separate accreditation or certification is not allowed.

Therapeutic certification or accreditation by JCAHO, COA or CARF may be recognized by NIPSA. In such cases there will be no certification charges, but dues will be the same as given above.

The accreditation charge for schools or programs that are undergoing joint accreditation with another accrediting body is \$1200.00 for the normal 7-year cycle and \$850.00 for the 5-year cycle when using NIPSA protocols. If the protocols of a NIPSA recognized joint accrediting organization are used the fee is \$500.00, and the accreditation cycle will be determined by the policies of the reciprocal accrediting association.

Accreditation and certification fees cover all administrative costs and materials, **BUT DO NOT COVER THE COST OF THE SITE VISITATION.** Schools and programs are responsible for the costs incurred by the visiting committee for each site including all meals, travel, lodging and miscellaneous charges.