

POLICY TITLE: Accreditation Policy	
ADOPTION/EFFECTIVE DATE: December 20, 2010	MOST RECENTLY UPDATED:
Updated: October 14, 2014 December 17, 2017	

**Purpose**

The D.C. Public Charter School Accreditation Policy applies to all public charter schools authorized by the D.C Public Charter School Board (DC PCSB).

**Policy**

Every charter school must obtain accreditation from an accrediting body approved by DC PCSB by the end of its ninth year of operation. Additionally, a school must, at minimum, be in the candidacy phase<sup>1</sup> with an approved accrediting agency by December 31 of its seventh year of operation. Schools with residential education<sup>1</sup> programs must also obtain accreditation for their residential education programs. All schools with residential education programs that are currently accredited must work to ensure that their residential programs are fully accredited no later than July 31, 2019. Schools with residential programs in the candidacy phase by January 1, 2021 must also pursue accreditation for its residential programs by the end of the ninth year of operation.

**Failure to Comply**

A school will be considered “out of compliance” and may be subject to board action if it fails to enter the candidacy phase with an approved accrediting agency by December 31 of its seventh year of operation or fails to secure accreditation by the completion of the school’s ninth year of operation. Failure to have or maintain accreditation for the entire school program, including the residential education program, is grounds for charter non-continuance or non-renewal at a school’s ten-year review and all subsequent reviews and renewals, respectively.

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<sup>1</sup> Pursuant to DC Code § 38-1802.04(c)(14)(D), a school may provide a program of residential education. where students reside on campus or at alternative location(s) during any part of the school year.

## References

The D.C. School Reform Act of 1995 § 38-1802.02 requires as part of the petition for a charter to operate a charter school "An assurance the proposed school will seek, obtain, and maintain accreditation" from at least one of the following:

- A. The Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools
- B. The Association of Independent Maryland Schools (*no longer active*);
- C. AdvancED (*formerly the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools*);
- D. The Virginia Association of Independent Schools (*no longer active*);
- E. American Montessori Internationale (*no longer active*);
- F. The American Montessori Society;
- G. The National Academy of Early Childhood Programs (*also known as National Association for the Education of Young Children*);
- H. American Academy for Liberal Education;
- I. KIPP Foundation;
- J. National Commission for the Accreditation of Special Education Services;
- K. International Primary Curriculum; or
- L. Any other accrediting body deemed appropriate by the eligible chartering authority that granted the charter to the school<sup>2</sup>

### **Standards for Adding Additional Agencies to Add to the List**

Each agency on the approved list must meet the standards below. Schools may request to have an agency added to the approved list, and DC PCSB's Board will use the criteria below to determine approval.

1. Standards: The accrediting agency, in collaboration with educational institutions, establishes standards.
2. Self-study: The institution or program seeking accreditation prepares an in-depth self-evaluation study that measures its performance against the standards established by the accrediting agency.
3. On-site Evaluation: A team selected by the accrediting agency visits the institution or program to determine first-hand if the applicant meets the established standards.
4. Monitoring: The accrediting agency monitors each accredited institution or program throughout the period of accreditation granted to verify that it continues to meet the agency's standards.
5. Reevaluation: The accrediting agency periodically reevaluates each institution or program that it lists to ascertain whether continuation of its accredited or pre-accredited status is warranted.

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<sup>2</sup> Per its policy, DC PCSB deemed the following agencies appropriate accrediting bodies, in the year noted: AALE (2003); KIPP Foundation (2013); NCASES (2014); IPC (2014)

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