



Strategic Plan Priority | System Design

Goal: School and district structures and systems adapt to meet the evolving needs of the student population and community as a whole. Students are prepared to adapt as needed to fully participate in the world beyond the classroom.

Private School Approvals

PREPARED FOR THE MAY 2020 BOARD MEETING

Business Item

Materials included in packet:

- Memo
- List of private schools for consideration of approval (may be in the Additional Materials folder)

Synopsis:

State Board of Education (SBE) staff will present a brief summary of the approval process and information about private schools. The Board annually approves private schools. Most schools are approved at the May Board meeting. Additional schools may be considered at the July board meeting.

Business Items:

- The Board will consider approval of private schools at the May meeting.





The Washington State Board of Education

An education system where students are engaged in personalized education pathways that prepare them for civic engagement, careers, postsecondary education, and lifelong learning.

PRIVATE SCHOOL APPROVALS

PREPARED FOR THE MAY 2020 BOARD MEETING

Background

At the May 2020 State Board of Education (SBE) meeting the Board will consider approval of private schools. The recommendation for approval is based on “minimum state controls necessary to insure the health and safety of all the students in the state and to insure a sufficient basic education to meet usual graduation requirements.” ([RCW 28A.195.010](#).) Staff recommends the Board approve the list of private schools.

Legislation passed in 2018 (HB 2824) changed the Board’s role in relationship to private schools. The private school approval process shifted from a shared responsibility of the Office of the Superintendent of Public (OSPI) and the SBE to a responsibility of the SBE. Private schools continued to work with OSPI on access to Federal programs and reporting requirements. Changes went into effect as of January 1, 2019, so 2020 is the second year that SBE staff have processed private school applications and approvals.

Five hundred and fifty-one private schools were approved to operate in 2019-2020, and approximately 82,000 Washington students attend private schools (about 6.8 percent of the total student population).

Annual approval of private schools by the Board takes place at the May and July Board meetings, with most schools approved in May. If a school is not in compliance with private school requirements but the Board wishes to give the school time to address and meet the requirements, the Board may provisionally approve schools for up to one year.

Private School Requirements, Rights, and Authority

Table 1: Summary of the major requirements, rights, and authorities of private schools in [RCW 28A.195](#) and [WAC 180-90](#).

Requirements, Rights, and Authorities	Notes
<u>Annual Certification:</u> Each year, superintendents of private school districts or principals of private schools will file a statement with SBE certifying that the minimum requirements of law are being met.	This certification is part of the annual approval application.
<u>Instructional Time:</u> No fewer than 180 school days, or the equivalent in instructional hours, and a school-wide annual average of 1,000 instructional hours for	The SBE emergency rules adopted April 8, 2020, releases private

Requirements, Rights, and Authorities	Notes
grades one through twelve, and at least 450 hours for kindergarten.	schools from this requirement for the remainder of the 2019-2020.
<u>Teacher Qualifications:</u> Teachers must hold a Washington state certification, or be people of unusual competence supervised by a certificated educator. The school must submit an annual statement explaining such circumstances to OSPI.	"People of unusual competence" is defined in WAC 180-90-112 .
<u>Home-based Extension Program:</u> Private schools may operate an extension program for parents or guardians for home-based instruction. A certificated educator must supervise the parents or guardians, spend a minimum monthly average of an hour of contact per week with the students, and evaluate the students' progress. Supervising educators shall not supervise more than 30 extension program students.	
<u>Record-keeping:</u> Private schools must take appropriate measures to safeguard permanent records.	
<u>Facility:</u> The physical facilities of the school must be adequate to meet the program needs, and meet reasonable health and fire requirements.	
<u>Curriculum:</u> Private school curriculum shall include instruction in "occupational education, science, mathematics, language, social studies, history, health, reading, writing, spelling, and the development of appreciation of art and music, all in sufficient units for meeting state board of education graduation requirements."	Private school students must meet credit graduation requirements, but not the High School and Beyond Plan, or an assessment or pathway requirements. The SBE emergency rules adopted April 8, 2020, authorizes private schools to grant a waiver of credit graduation requirements on an individual basis to students who were "on-track" to graduate in 2020.
<u>Policies:</u> Maintain policy statements that are available for parent review.	
Private schools may not engage in a policy of racial segregation or discrimination.	
Private school students are not required to meet state learning goals or meet assessment requirements.	Although not required to, many private schools choose to teach state learning standards. They also may choose to have their students take state tests (the school pays for the tests and the results are shared only with the school).
Private schools may teach "religious beliefs and doctrines, if any: to pray in class and in assemblies, to	

Requirements, Rights, and Authorities	Notes
teach patriotism including requiring students to salute the flag of the United State if that be the custom of the particular private school.” (RCW 28A.195.020.)	
Private schools are authorized to require that employees undergo a record check with the Washington State Patrol.	
<u>Online programs:</u> Approved private schools may offer and administer an online school program.	Generally private schools must also provide in-person instruction for at least some of their students. The SBE emergency rules adopted April 8, 2020, allows private schools that were approved in 2019-2020 to start school in Fall 2020 with a completely online program.
<u>Participation in Federal programs:</u> Nonprofit private schools may participate in some Federal Programs. Public school districts must consult with nonprofit private schools within their district boundaries to determine how to serve all eligible students. Districts must set aside proportional funds of the district’s allocation for private school students and educators within the district’s boundaries.	In 2017-2018 funds for services ranged from \$357 to \$1,296 per student in districts with private schools that participated in the program.
<u>Advisory committee:</u> The Superintendent of Public Instruction is directed to appoint a private school advisory committee broadly representative of educators, legislators and private school groups.	The Private School Advisory Committee meets twice a year.

Action

At the May 2020 meeting the Board will consider approval of private schools. All schools listed for consideration of approval at the May meeting have completed a private school application that has been reviewed by SBE staff. The private school Heads of School have certified that the requirements of private school law will be met in the 2020-2021 school year.

If you have questions regarding this memo, please contact Linda Drake at linda.drake@k12.wa.us.