KyNPSC Procedures
For Accrediting Agencies Seeking Recognition
By the Kentucky Board of Education

The Kentucky Non-Public Schools Commission (KyNPSC) has established procedures to facilitate the appropriate application, review, and recommendation of qualified and credible regional or national accrediting associations to the Kentucky Board of Education (KBE) for possible recognition to certify non-public schools in Kentucky.

The following procedures are required of accrediting associations seeking recommendation by the KYNPSC:

STEP 1. INITIAL APPLICATION TO KYNPSC
- a) Application Form and Exhibits
  - 1) Basic Data
  - 2) KYNPSC Application Exhibits
    - a. Articles of Incorporation/Charter
    - b. Bylaws
    - c. Board of Directors and Credentials
    - d. List of currently accredited schools
    - e. Association's Standards for Membership
    - f. Association's Procedures/Operations Manual
    - g. Associations' Published Descriptive Material
    - h. Accreditation manual
    - i. External Audit or Other Reasonable Financial Documentation
  - 3) Statement of Intent and Agreement
- b) Payment of Application Fee
- c) Submission to the KyNPSC Chairperson

STEP 2. REVIEW PROCESS
- a) Preliminary Review by KYNPSC Chairperson or Designee
- b) Assignment of Commission Coordinator
- c) Compliance Checklist and Evidence
- d) Site Visits
  - 1) Association Office
  - 2) Accreditation Review Hearings (Association Commission Meeting)
  - 3) On-Site Accreditation Team Visit
- e) Site Visit Report
- f) Association Response
- g) Review and Hearings by the Accreditation and Review Committee

STEP 3. RECOGNITION PROCESS
- a) Recommendation by the Accreditation and Review Committee
- b) Consideration by the KYNPSC
- c) Voting by the KYNPSC
- d) Status Decisions
  - 1) Recommend
  - 2) Provisional Recommendation
  - 3) Do Not Recommend

STEP 1: INITIAL APPLICATION TO KYNPSC

Each accrediting association seeking potential recognition by the KBE to certify non-public schools in Kentucky is required to request an application from the KYNPSC office. KYNPSC will then send an initial application packet to the prospective applicant.

It should be noted that submission of the completed application form, materials, and fees by an accrediting association does not guarantee membership in the Kentucky Non-Public Schools Commission nor does it obligate KYNPSC to enter the accrediting association into its recognition process.

a) ***Application Form and Exhibits.*** The completed application form will contain the following elements:

1) *Basic Data.* The accrediting association making application to KYNPSC will enter all requested information regarding the nature and scope of its operations, membership, and activities.

2) *KYNPSC Application Exhibits.* The following documents will be submitted to validate basic eligibility:

a) A copy of its current Articles of Incorporation and state charter (and/or letter of approval)
b) A copy of its official Bylaws
c) List of its current Board of Directors and their credentials
d) Current membership, by state, of all schools participating in its accreditation process including the current accreditation status of each school
e) Accreditation manual or other publications containing accreditation standards, procedures, and policies

3) *Statement of Intent and Agreement.* The accrediting association must sign this statement to officially indicate its intent to seek recommendation by the KyNPSC for recognition by the KBE and agree to participate in the review and recognition process as outlined.

b) ***Payment of Application Fee.*** An application fee of **($TBD)** must be included with the application to KYNPSC. Payment of the application fee will be required before the application may be forwarded to the Accreditation and Review Committee.

c) ***Submission to the Chairperson.*** The application, supporting documentation, and the application fee will be submitted to the KYNPSC offices and directed to the attention of the Chairperson.

An initial review is conducted by the Chairperson or designee to verify that procedures have been duly followed, submitted materials are complete, and all required fees have been paid. Provided all materials and fees are in order, the application will then be forwarded to the Accreditation and Review Committee. The Chairperson will contact the accrediting association as may be necessary should any additional materials or information be required.

If the accrediting association withdraws its application before or during the review process, **($TBD)** will be refunded to the accrediting association (unless additional expenses have been incurred).

STEP 2: REVIEW PROCESS

The review process provides an opportunity for the Accreditation and Review Committee to receive and review initial application materials, initiate the self-study process, and conduct necessary on-site visits to validate eligibility and ensure the association's school site visit protocol sufficiently validates a school's compliance with the association's published accreditation standards.

The review process serves to build a witness of the accrediting association's quality and credibility by assembling necessary reports and documentation before presentation to the KyNPSC.

a) ***Preliminary Review.*** The Accreditation and Review Committee will review the application and documents that were initially submitted to the Chairperson. The Commission will then validate the Chairperson's decision and proceed with the review process.

   Should the Commission determine the accrediting association is ineligible for recommendation; the association will be so notified. No further action will be taken with the association unless it decides to file an appeal.

b) ***Assignment of Commission Coordinator.*** The Accreditation and Review Committee will assign one of its Commissioners to serve as coordinator for each accrediting association the Commission has determined to be eligible to continue in the review process. The coordinator will advise the applicant in the preparation of its self-study and exhibits and later in site visits to be conducted.

c) ***Self-Study and Exhibits.*** The coordinator will work with his or her assigned accrediting association regarding the preparation of the Self-Study Report and establish a projected time line for its completion

The Compliance Checklist is to be conducted internally by the accrediting association and will consist of its documentation and responses to each of the standards contained in the KYNPSC checklist. This activity should serve as a catalyst for self-examination and improvement of the association, and the final report should testify of the current levels of acceptance with each standard listed.

The Compliance Checklist should be submitted to the coordinator before the Site Visits are to be scheduled, providing the opportunity for the coordinator to obtain necessary background information. The completed Compliance Checklist will be reviewed by the assigned coordinator who will establish a date(s) for the site visit of the accrediting association in order to validate the materials contained in the Compliance Checklist.

d) ***Site Visits.*** The purposes of Site Visits to an applicant accrediting association are (1) to validate all information submitted in the application and the Compliance Checklist and (2) to make appropriate recommendations regarding the association's fulfillment of KYNPSC standards.

The Site Visit will be conducted by professional educators knowledgeable in the field of non-public school accreditation and in the standards and procedures of KYNPSC. Site Visit representatives will be impartial and have no professional ties or interests in the accrediting association being reviewed. The representatives will not receive remuneration for their participation in the Site Visit, but will be reimbursed by the accrediting association for the expenses of travel, lodging, and meals.

KYNPSC may require three different types of Site Visits per applicant accrediting association.

1) *Headquarters.* All applicant associations must participate in a Site Visit of their headquarters facility. The KYNPSC representative on the Site Visit will be granted appropriate access to facilities, files, records, and personnel. Generally, a site visit of the headquarters facility may be accomplished in one day.

2) *Accreditation Review Hearings.* Applicants must also participate in a Site Visit of its accreditation review hearings during which accreditation decisions of member schools are made. The KYNPSC representative will be present to validate the effectiveness and professionalism of the accreditation process. This visit may or may not be combined with the Site Visit of the headquarters school as appropriate.

3) On-Site Accreditation Team Visit

3) *School Site Visit.* As directed by the Commission, a Site Visit to one of the schools participating in the accreditation process of the applicant association may be conducted. The purpose of this Site Visit is to ensure that the association's school site visit protocol sufficiently validates a school's compliance with the association's published accreditation standards. This Site Visit will be announced to both the accrediting association and the school and may be directed to specific accreditation activities.

e) ***Site Visit Report.*** A written report from the Site Visit representative will be sent to the association with a copy forwarded to the Chairperson of the Accreditation and Review Committee.

The Site Visit report(s), along with the Compliance Checklist and other pertinent materials, will be reviewed by the Accreditation and Review Committee during its formal review hearings. Any association responses will also be reviewed and any appeal of the Site Visit findings will be considered at that time. After appropriate study and discussion, the Commission will prepare its recommendation to be presented to the KyNPSC during one of its regular meetings.

f) ***Association Response.*** Accrediting associations may submit a written response to the Site Visit Report, the review of its Self-Study documents, or other comments by KYNPSC or its representatives. Any association responses should be received in sufficient time to be forwarded to the Accreditation and Review Committee for its initial review.

The response of the accrediting association must address the specific issues mentioned in the Site Visit Report or other reports or comments from KYNPSC or its representatives. The response will indicate what actions were taken to correct the discrepancies and/or to request an appeal of any recommendations made.

g) ***Review and Hearings by the Accreditation and Review Committee.*** The Accreditation and Review Committee will convene prior to the meeting of the KyNPSC when accrediting associations in the review process will be considered for recommendation to the KBE for recognition. The Commission will review application materials, Self-Study Report, Site Visit Report, and any other pertinent information of each accrediting association being considered.

An accrediting association being reviewed for membership by the Commission must have a representative in attendance during the Commission hearings to answer questions or concerns that the Commission may have. Failure to have an official representative available during these hearings may jeopardize the outcome of the hearings.

Once the Commission hearings are concluded, the Commission will present its recommendations to the KyNPSC which will vote on official recommendation.

STEP 3: RECOMMENDATION PROCESS

The recommendation process serves as an external witness and validation of the mission and quality of the accrediting associations that are recommended to the Kentucky Board of Education for recognition. The process is conducted by the KyNPSC (during a regularly scheduled meeting) with representatives from peer accrediting associations participating in the review and final vote regarding recommendation by the KyNPSC.

All accrediting associations being presented for recommendation by the KyNPSC are required to send an official representative to be in attendance at the KyNPSC meeting at which their association is formally considered for recognition.

a) ***Recommendation by the Accreditation and Review Committee.*** The recommendation of the Accreditation and Review Committee concerning each applicant is presented to the KyNPSC. This recommendation, along with any pertinent information, will be considered during the meetings of the KyNPSC.

b) ***Consideration by the KyNPSC.*** Once the KyNPSC has received the recommendations of the Accreditation and Review Committee, the floor will be opened for discussion. Those accrediting associations **not** being recommended to move forward to the KBE will be given the opportunity to make a brief presentation or to formally appeal the recommendation of the Accreditation and Review Committee.

c) ***Voting by the KyNPSC.*** The KyNPSC, consisting of public representatives and representatives of member accrediting associations, will cast their votes regarding the recommendation of each of the accrediting associations being presented to move forward to the KBE. The vote of the KyNPSC will be final and cannot be appealed, except to present new information.

d) ***Status Decisions.*** The KyNPSC has the following options for accrediting associations being recommended to the KBE for possible recognition:

1) *Recommend.* The Accrediting association will be recommended by the KyNPSC and presented to the KBE for possible recognition. No further action will be required of the association at this time.

2) *Provisional Recommendation.* The accrediting association has been determined to have specific deficiencies that prevent full recognition. These deficiencies are to be corrected before full recommendation can be conferred. The KyNPSC will designate the action required by the accrediting association to be considered for full recommendation.

   Unless otherwise specified, the Provisional association will be reviewed at the next meeting of the KyNPSC. Should the Provisional association fail to make the required corrections by the specified deadline to the satisfaction of the KyNPSC, final recommendation may be denied.

3) *Recommendation Denied.* The KyNPSC has decided to withhold recognition, and the accrediting association will be dropped from the KYNPSC review and recommendation process.

   Should the accrediting association desire to reenter the KYNPSC review and recommendation process, it will be required to wait one (1) full year before it may resubmit an application and initiate the review process.