

House File 113 - Introduced

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A BILL FOR

1 An Act relating to independent accreditation of nonpublic
2 schools.

3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF IOWA:

1 Section 1. Section 256.11, Code 2013, is amended by adding
2 the following new subsection:

3 NEW SUBSECTION. 16. *a.* Notwithstanding subsections 1
4 through 12, a nonpublic school may be accredited by an approved
5 independent accrediting agency as provided in this subsection
6 instead of by the state board. The department shall maintain a
7 list of approved independent accrediting agencies comprised of
8 at least six regional or national nonprofit, nongovernmental
9 agencies recognized in the education community as reliable
10 authorities concerning the quality of education offered by a
11 school and shall publish the list of independent accrediting
12 agencies on the department's internet site. The list shall
13 include but not be limited to the north central association
14 commission on accreditation and school improvement, the
15 independent schools association of the central states, the
16 association of christian schools international, christian
17 schools international, the evangelical lutheran education
18 association of the evangelical lutheran church in America, and
19 the national accreditation commission of the lutheran church
20 — Missouri synod.

21 *b.* A nonpublic school that participates in the accreditation
22 process offered by an independent accrediting agency on
23 the approved list published pursuant to paragraph "a" shall
24 be deemed to meet the education standards of this section.
25 However, such a school shall comply with statutory health and
26 safety requirements for school facilities.

27 *c.* If the department takes preliminary action to remove an
28 independent accrediting agency from the approved list published
29 on its internet site pursuant to paragraph "a", the department
30 shall, at least one year prior to removing the agency from
31 the approved list, notify a nonpublic school participating
32 in the accreditation process offered by the agency of the
33 department's intent to remove the agency from its approved list
34 of independent accrediting agencies. The notice shall also be
35 posted on the department's internet site and shall contain the

1 proposed date of removal. The nonpublic school that received
2 notification shall attain accreditation under this subsection
3 or subsections 1 through 12 not later than one year following
4 the date on which the department removes the agency from its
5 list of independent accrediting agencies.

6 *d.* If the department takes preliminary action to remove an
7 independent accrediting agency that is specified in paragraph
8 "a" from the approved list published pursuant to paragraph
9 "a", the department shall submit to the general assembly the
10 department's findings and recommendations for statutory change
11 to effect removal of the agency from the approved list.

12 EXPLANATION

13 This bill establishes an alternative to the accreditation
14 of nonpublic schools by the state board of education by
15 requiring the department of education to maintain a list of
16 approved independent accrediting agencies comprised of at
17 least six regional or national nonprofit, nongovernmental
18 agencies recognized in the education community as reliable
19 authorities concerning the quality of education offered by a
20 school, and to publish the list of independent accrediting
21 agencies on the department's internet site. A nonpublic school
22 that participates in the accreditation process offered by an
23 independent accrediting agency on the list published by the
24 department shall be deemed to meet the education standards of
25 Code section 256.11. However, such a school shall comply with
26 statutory health and safety requirements for school facilities.

27 The list shall include the north central association
28 commission on accreditation and school improvement, the
29 independent schools association of the central states, the
30 association of christian schools international, christian
31 schools international, the evangelical lutheran education
32 association of the evangelical lutheran church in America, and
33 the national accreditation commission of the lutheran church
34 — Missouri synod.

35 If the department takes preliminary action to remove an

1 agency from its list of approved independent accrediting
2 agencies, the department shall notify a nonpublic school
3 accredited through the alternative process of the state board's
4 intent to remove the independent accrediting agency from its
5 approved list at least one year prior to removing the agency
6 from the approved list, and the nonpublic school shall attain
7 accreditation not later than one year following the date on
8 which the state board removes the agency from its approved list
9 of independent accrediting agencies.

10 If the department takes preliminary action to remove
11 an agency specified in the bill from the approved list,
12 the department shall submit to the general assembly the
13 department's findings and recommendations for statutory change
14 to effect removal of the agency from the approved list.