



Which States Require Private Schools to be Accredited?

(As of February 20, 2026)

“The majority of state regulations on accreditation are optional. While most states require registration (n=34), approval (n=25), and licensing (n=38) of private schools, accreditation in 35 states is optional for private schools. Additionally, states may allow private schools to receive third-party accreditation rather than state accreditation. Some states, such as Hawaii or Indiana, may require private schools to be accredited, recognized, or licensed, but the choice of which to acquire is left to the private school.” (EdChoice, *The School Starter Checklist*¹)

State	Accreditation Status for Operation	Key Notes/Conditions
Alabama	Not Required	No requirements for accreditation, approval, or licensure.
Alaska	Optional	No requirements for registration, approval, or licensure.
Arizona	Not Required	No requirements for registration, accreditation, state approval, or licensure.
Arkansas	Not Required	No requirements for registration, accreditation, approval, or licensure.
California	Not Required	No requirement for accreditation, approval, or licensure; registration is required.
Colorado	Not Specified as Required	Private schools must be licensed (which implies approval).
Connecticut	Not Required	No requirements for registration, accreditation, approval, or licensure.
Delaware	Not Required	No requirements for registration, accreditation, approval, or licensure.
Florida	Not Required	Registration is required; no mention of accreditation or approval beyond registration.
Georgia	Not Required	No requirements for registration, accreditation, approval, or licensure.
Hawaii	Required or Alternative	Private schools must be licensed by the Hawaii Council of Private Schools or accredited by a recognized accrediting body.
Idaho	Optional	No requirements for registration, approval, or licensure; state accreditation is optional.
Illinois	Not Required	Registration is optional; neither accreditation, approval, nor licensure is required.
Indiana	Optional	State accreditation and approval are both optional.
Iowa	Optional	State accreditation is optional; no requirements for registration, approval, or licensure.
Kansas	Not Required	Registration is required; neither accreditation, approval, nor licensure is required.
Kentucky	Optional	State accrediting and licensing are optional; no requirements for registration or approval.
Louisiana	Voluntary	Registration, accreditation, and approval are voluntary.
Maine	Optional	State approval is required; accreditation is optional.
Maryland	Not Specified as Required	Private schools must be approved by the state (certificate of approval required, with exemptions for certain church-operated schools).

¹ <https://www.edchoice.org/research/the-school-starter-checklist/>

Massachusetts	Not Specified as Required	State approval is mandatory.
Michigan	Not Specified as Required	Private schools must be approved by the state.
Minnesota	Voluntary	State accreditation is voluntary.
Mississippi	Optional	State approval is optional.
Missouri	Not Required	No specific requirements listed for accreditation, approval, or licensure.
Montana	Not Required	No specific requirements listed for accreditation, approval, or licensure.
Nebraska	Optional	Approval is required unless the school chooses to operate under exempt provisions; accreditation optional under exempt status.
Nevada	Not Specified as Required	All private schools must be licensed by the Nevada Department of Education (with exemptions for certain types).
New Hampshire	Not Specified as Required	Private schools must be approved by the state.
New Jersey	Not Required	Neither accreditation nor approval is required; registration not mentioned as required.
New Mexico	Optional	State accreditation is optional.
New York	Optional	State approval is optional.
North Carolina	Optional	State accreditation is optional.
North Dakota	Not Specified as Required	State approval is mandatory.
Ohio	Not Required	Neither chartered nor non-chartered private schools require state approval; accreditation not specified as required.
Oklahoma	Not Specified as Required	Private schools must be licensed by the state.
Oregon	Not Required	No specific requirements listed for accreditation, approval, or licensure.
Pennsylvania	Varies	Private schools fall into classes (licensed, non-licensed, accredited) with varying requirements; licensure and approval apply to licensed schools.
Rhode Island	Not Specified as Required	State approval is mandatory.
South Carolina	Not Required	No specific requirements listed for accreditation, approval, or licensure.
South Dakota	Not Required	No specific requirements listed for accreditation, approval, or licensure.
Tennessee	Varies	Varies by classification; several categories are generally exempt from state oversight, including approval and accreditation.
Texas	Optional	No requirements for accreditation mentioned; accreditation optional for meeting seat time requirements.
Utah	Not Required	No specific requirements listed for accreditation, approval, or licensure.
Vermont	Not Specified as Required	Either state approval or recognition is mandatory.
Virginia	Not Required	No specific requirements listed for accreditation, approval, or licensure.
Washington	Not Specified as Required	All private schools must be approved by the Washington State Board of Education.
West Virginia	Not Required	No specific requirements listed for accreditation, approval, or licensure.
Wisconsin	Optional	Accreditation is optional unless the school participates in a state private school choice program.
Wyoming	Not Specified as Required	Private schools must be licensed by the state.

What other requirements are common?

The majority of states have established private school regulations for compulsory attendance, length of school year and day, curriculum, health and safety requirements, transportation, and recordkeeping and reports. For states that do provide a length of the school year and days requirement (n=43), it typically aligns with compulsory attendance laws (n=46), and the number of days students are expected to attend school ranges from 148 to 180 days. Regulations surrounding curriculum (n=43) vary but typically require private schools to offer specific content areas of study and to report on active curriculum. North Dakota, Ohio, and Oklahoma were the only states that did not have regulations for health and safety requirements. Additionally, Ohio was the only state to not publicly provide recordkeeping and report regulations. However, it should be noted that each of the states

has “no publicly available information” for the regulations, meaning that requirements may exist but could be shared during the establishment or application process of private schools but not with the public.

What about legal status?

The majority of states do not provide information regarding Nonprofit or for-profit status, commercial space requirements, liability insurance regulations, or reimbursement for performing state and local functions. Generally, states that do provide information on private school profit status (n=11) insinuate the regulation through descriptions of other state legislation or the definitions of profit status. For example, a state may define a private school as a “Nonprofit or for-profit” organization or entity, and therefore, the state regulation on profit status would be recorded as “either.” Some states, such as Missouri, Louisiana, and Georgia, require private schools to be Nonprofit to meet approval regulations or participate in equitable services.