



Florida Association of
Academic Nonpublic Schools

Standards for “ACCREDITING MEMBERS”

By State law, the Florida Department of Education does not act as an accrediting agency. In Florida, accreditation of all schools and programs is entirely voluntary. Many schools desire to seek accreditation. They believe that a thoughtful evaluation of their facilities, faculty and programs strengthens a school and presents the public with assurance that the school is fulfilling its published purpose and philosophy.

Each FAANS Accrediting Member has its own Standards and Evaluation Procedures. Those may vary in details and emphasis from one association to another, but they all involve on-site evaluation and periodic re-evaluation by peers and Association Officers. FAANS recognizes an association as an “Accrediting Member” only after reviewing the Standards and Procedures of the association or organization and verifying that all Standards indicated below have been met.

Accrediting Membership in FAANS is available to organizations or associations of nonpublic schools in Florida that comply with the following Standards:

1. The organization must have been a FAANS “**Non-Accrediting Member**” for a minimum of **three (3)** consecutive years prior to submitting an application for “**Accrediting Member**” status.
2. The Accrediting organization must have been in existence for a minimum of **ten (10) years**.
3. The Accrediting organization must have been involved in the process of accrediting its schools for a minimum of **five (5) years**.
4. The Accrediting organization and all its member schools must comply with local, State and Federal laws.
5. The Accrediting organization must have at least **ten (10)** separately governed and operated accredited schools in at least **ten (10) counties** of Florida. At least **half (50%)** of these schools must be fully accredited by one or more FAANS Accrediting Member organization. *
6. The Accrediting organization must obtain the written sponsorship of two FAANS Accrediting Associations and a written recommendation letter from the representative from a FAANS Accrediting Member organization that visited one of their accredited member schools during an accreditation evaluation visit.
7. The Accrediting organization must be predominantly a statewide body.
8. The Accrediting organization’s Accredited Member Schools must all meet the FAANS “**Early Childhood Standards**” and the “**Minimum K-12 Standards for Schools Accredited by a FAANS Accrediting Member.**”
9. The Accrediting organization must have a current website that provides the following minimum information:
 - a. History, Purpose and Philosophy
 - b. By-Laws, Code of Ethics and Mission Statement
 - c. Standards and evaluative criteria, Policies and Procedures, including non-discriminatory policies
 - d. Board of Directors; *(with Name, Title and contact information of each Director)*
 - e. School Membership Chart with detailed information about each member school

- f. All Accreditation Forms, including Self-Study, Checklists, Guidelines for Visiting Committee, etc.
- g. Forms and Fee Schedule

10. Accrediting Member organizations must inform their accredited schools that they are prohibited from representing themselves or advertising that they are members of FAANS or that they are accredited by FAANS. Only FAANS recognized organizations, not individual schools, may be FAANS Members.

11. FAANS does not, by intent or policy, oversee the operations of its individual memberships or the schools within each organization's membership. Compliance of FAANS Standards and other criteria by individual members is the responsibility of each organization.

12. Accrediting Member organizations must abide by the FAANS Code of Ethics as published in the FAANS website. They must also annually submit electronically to the FAANS Secretary a signed copy of the "Code of Ethics." This must be signed and acknowledged by the President of the organization or a representative with the authority to sign on behalf of the organization. FAANS stipulates that the Code establishes a framework upon which the FAANS member organizations may work with each other in an environment of integrity and trust. Subscription to the Code (i.e., membership in FAANS) is indicative of each member organization's commitment to the "spirit" of the Code as well as the "letter."

13. Accrediting Member organizations must annually submit electronically to the FAANS Secretary a signed form verifying compliance with the "Standards for Accrediting Members." This form must be signed and acknowledged by the President of the organization or a representative with the authority to sign on behalf of the organization.

14. Accrediting Member organizations must report any substantial changes to their accrediting process or Standards revisions to the FAANS Secretary and to the Chair of the Membership and Standards Committee during the year the substantial change is made. These changes must also be posted on the organization's website.

15. Accrediting Member organizations must have a liaison available to the Florida Department of Education and maintain current information on file with the FDOE.

16. All FAANS fees/dues must be current at all times.

17. A representative of the Accrediting Member organization must attend two (2) FAANS Meetings each year.

18. Once an organization has been welcomed as a FAANS "Accrediting Member," they must understand and abide by these Standards and by the FAANS Mission Statement and Code of Ethics. Failure to do so will jeopardize the organization's membership status.

19. In order to maintain the "Accrediting Member" status, the accrediting organization must meet and maintain the above requirements.

20. Any of the above standards may be waived or modified by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the FAANS "Accrediting Member" Associations.

21. MEMBERSHIP REINSTATEMENT

- a. An Accrediting Member that has allowed their membership in FAANS to lapse for failure to pay dues or failure to attend meetings, may be reinstated as an Accrediting Member in good standing if they abide by the following:
 - i. A Director of the organization must submit an email request to the FAANS Executive Officers expressing their desire to be re-instated.

- ii. The organization must complete and submit via email to the FAANS Membership & Standards Committee, the FAANS “ACCREDITING MEMBER” APPLICATION, together with the \$500.00 Application Fee and the corresponding FAANS dues of the two (2) previous years.
- iii. The organization’s name, purpose and mission must be the same as it was when it was originally approved as a FAANS Accrediting Member.
- iv. A representative of the organization must attend at least two consecutive FAANS Meetings and must meet with the Membership & Standards Committee prior to both FAANS meetings before it can be voted on for reinstatement.
- v. The organization must meet all Standards for Accrediting Members.
- vii. The organization must be voted on by majority of FAANS Accrediting Members in attendance at the Spring meeting.

22. COMPLAINT PROTOCOL

- a. FAANS does not investigate complaints from Parents, Employees or Non-Member schools.
- b. In the event that a complaining party desires to file a complaint against a Member organization, FAANS will advise the complaining party that they must execute and return an original **Release and Waiver** form in favor of FAANS. Any complaints submitted without this required Release and Waiver will not be acknowledged.
- c. The complaint may not be anonymous and must specify the accreditation standard(s) or FAANS policy that complainant is alleging was violated.
- d. If a valid non-anonymous complaint is received regarding a FAANS Accrediting Member (not an individual school), that may jeopardize the association’s membership status, the FAANS President will inform the Association’s representative in writing.
- e. The Accrediting Member’s representative will then have thirty (30) days to respond to the allegations in writing. The information will be emailed to the Chair of the FAANS Membership and Standards Committee and to the FAANS President who will decide whether or not the allegation(s) merit further investigation. The Chair will then report findings to the FAANS Executive Officers.
- f. The complainant will not be informed of the results of the investigation.
- g. Decision to retain or rescind membership will be by majority vote of the FAANS Executive Officers at the subsequent FAANS Meeting unless they deem that immediate action is necessary.

* Standard #5 may be waived if organization has been recognized as a FAANS Accrediting Member for ten (10) years or more.

For information about the Standards and Procedures for Accreditation of any FAANS Accrediting Member, go to the website link for that particular organization.