



Developing Christlike Character  
and Academic Excellence

## **What Does it Mean to Be an ACSI Accredited School?**

Our staff and Board of Directors are working diligently on earning accreditation with the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI) in addition to our Iowa Department of Education accreditation. The accreditation program of the ACSI is designed to assist member schools in achieving a standard of excellence and to encourage them in a continuous process of assessment and ongoing development. To desire excellence is to take seriously our commitment to Christ, whose name is excellent (Psalm 8:1). The process of achieving and maintaining accredited status is a means of proclaiming our commitment to doing things well. The major benefit to a school that goes through the accreditation process is the documentation of an intensive appraisal of each component of its ministry. The subsequent benefit is the status of being an accredited school. "Accreditation is a process of recognizing educational institutions for their standards, performance, integrity and quality" (Lowrie, 1984).

The Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI) Office of Academic Affairs is responsible for the accreditation program. Academic Affairs' mission is to provide programs, materials, and services that will enhance Christian schools spiritual and academic effectiveness. Accreditation enables Christian schools to maintain and improve the quality of their educational programs and to expand their understanding of the philosophy of Christian education.

Two major themes are obvious throughout the ACSI accreditation program. First, the program probes the spiritual aspects of each component of the organization. Second, the program addresses the educational quality and integrity of the school. The latter addresses the issues that demonstrate that the school is true to its own statements of philosophy, mission and goals and that it is meeting the standards of quality that are recognized by ACSI.

Meeting the accreditation standards and completing the self-study is a rigorous but very worthwhile process. It requires the intensive work of the school staff for at least one full year. In responding to the questions in the *ACSI Manual of School Accreditation-Evaluative Criteria*, the school explains its approaches and assesses its strengths and weaknesses. It also suggests plans for improvement in each of the component areas of the self-study. Supplementary documentation is required to support the answers and conclusions of the self-study.

ACSI is a charter member of the National Council for Private School Accreditation (NCPSA), and the accreditation program of ACSI has been fully recognized by them. NCPSA is a national review panel for standards and procedures of private school accrediting associations and is recognized in a number of states as an indicator of a quality accreditation process.