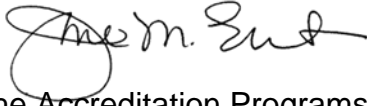




**TO:** The Honorable the Members of the Board of Regents  
**FROM:** Jhone M. Ebert   
**SUBJECT:** Recognition of the Accreditation Programs for the Council of Islamic Schools in North America and the New York Association of Christian Schools

**DATE:** March 30, 2017

**AUTHORIZATION(S):**   
**SUMMARY**

**Issue for Decision (Consent Agenda)**

Should the Board of Regents recognize the accreditation programs for two religious associations in New York State – the Council of Islamic Schools in North America and the New York Association of Christian Schools?

**Proposed Handling**

This item will come before the Board of Regents for decision at the April 2017 Board of Regents meeting.

**Background Information**

*Council of Islamic Schools in North America*

The Council of Islamic Schools in North America (CISNA), in partnership with AdvancEd and New England Association of Schools and Colleges, provides dual accreditation which includes Arabic, Islamic Studies, and Qur’anic Studies.

Accreditation standards include indicators of quality that apply to distinctive aspects of Islamic schools, which allows schools to include in their self-study and accreditation process the characteristics of, and expectations for, schools whose mission and educational program are shaped by their religious faith.

CISNA also strives to support the vital role of Islamic schools by advocating for the equitable opportunity of Islamic school students to participate in appropriate state and federal education programs, monitoring and analyzing legislation and regulations

affecting Islamic schools, and disseminating information about Islamic education to policy-makers and the public.

#### *New York Association of Christian Schools*

The New York Association of Christian Schools' (NYACS) accreditation program is defined as:

Applied to the Christian school movement, accreditation is the process by which a Christian school assesses its educational activities, in whole or part, and seeks an independent judgment to confirm that it has substantially achieved its objectives while also demonstrating an exemplary level of quality as defined by professionally-trained Christian educators.

The accreditation process clearly has at least two purposes. One is to facilitate the Association's task of holding individual schools accountable to the standards held in common with Christian Schools of proven excellence and to the school's own unique goals and objectives. The second, and the more important, is to assist a member school in its efforts at self-understanding, analysis, and improvement. (*American Association of Christian School Accreditation Manual*)

The schools seeking accreditation partake in a four-step process that includes: an application, appraisal, approval, and an audit. In addition, schools prepare required documents, including a BEDS Code application and a report of students' assessments results. A team of NYACS Board members visit the school and report back to the whole Board before the school is given approval.

#### *State Education Department and Religious Schools*

Religious schools are not required to be incorporated by the Department. Instead, they may be incorporated under the auspices of their religious institutions. Recent national events have prompted New York State leaders to reaffirm support for all residents, including the combat of hate crimes and protection of immigrant students. The Department's recognition of accreditation programs further establishes support for all students across public, religious, and independent schools. Recognition would also provide additional educational opportunities for students who have graduated from religious schools and wish to enroll in community colleges but cannot because their programs are not approved by the Department.

#### **Recommendation**

VOTED: The Board of Regents recognizes the accreditation programs for two religious associations in New York State – the Council of Islamic Schools in North America and the New York Association of Christian Schools.