

## Northshore Christian Academy

A Ministry of Northshore Christian Church ~ [www.northshorechristianschools.org](http://www.northshorechristianschools.org)

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## Accreditation for a Stronger School

For many years, the Underwriter's Laboratories and Consumer Reports have offered their approval and disapproval on products to consumers. School accreditation offers the same type of assurance for consumers, only around education. The State approves many K-12 private schools, however few submit to the rigors of accreditation.

Northshore Christian Academy (NCA) believes that the accreditation process results in a stronger school and stronger educational program. Since 2003, NCA has undergone three accreditation cycles by two separate educational agencies: ACSI (Association of Christian Schools International) and AdvancEd. We are in the process of completing our third accreditation cycle this school year.

### What schools are accredited, and why pursue accreditation if State approval has already been granted?

Accreditation is a process more associated with colleges than elementary schools. In fact, most people do not consider attending an unaccredited college for fear that their work may not be accepted by other universities. For elementary private schools, however, it is an optional exercise. Instead, the State Board of Education regulates all K-12 schools and tells them if they are approved, or not approved. A school that is approved meets the State's guidelines for elementary and secondary schools and grants a high school diploma. Since 1995, NCA continues to be annually approved by the State.

### Accreditation by two accreditation boards—The 6-year cycle and process:

The accreditation process reviews areas such as school operations and finance, admissions, personnel, curriculum and instruction, educational program, student services, facilities, safety, school climate, philosophy of education, and the strategic plan. In all, there are eight categories to review. Committees were formed around specific areas to analyze data, complete the review process, identify strengths, and set goals. The re-accreditation process has taken a year with the involvement of around 75 staff members, the school board, and volunteer leaders all included in some portion of the process.

### Why is NCA completing the accreditation process, when already approved by the State of Washington?

An evaluation by an outside organization lends credibility to our program. Every aspect of the school is thoroughly studied and documented for the accreditation team. The ACSI team is composed of school administrators from across the region who are familiar with excellent schools. Their job is to point out outstanding components of our program, and make recommendations for improvement. They have the power to deny schools which they feel are not up to par. At the completion of the past accreditation cycles, the visiting team commended our school in many areas as an excellent program. We are proud of our fine teaching staff and our programs.

The visiting team will be on site from February 26–March 1, 2017. They will complete their final report to national headquarters in May of 2017, recommending re-accreditation. As in the past, we will share the results with our parents and staff via an email communique.

**In conclusion**, we recognize the incredible opportunity and responsibility we have, to provide both a top-notch Christian educational program that ignites learning as well as future opportunities in our students. We are excited to invite the visiting team in February to help us continue in that endeavor. God has great plans for our students. God invites us to develop our students to become the leaders for a bright future.