



Escuela de Guadalupe is Accredited by ACIS

What does that mean and why does it matter?

Escuela de Guadalupe is an independent school. That means we are not part of a larger district or system. We exist as an independent entity with a Board of Trustees.

There are a lot of benefits to being independent! In fact, much of our program model is only possible because we are an independent school. For example, our independence allows us to listen to our community and respond in ways that best suit our school, rather than following protocols set by others for other schools. This is just one of many reasons why being independent is an asset to Escuela and to our community.

However, when a school is independent, and it is not accountable to a greater system, it may struggle to maintain high standards, continuity of program, financial viability, and strategic vision. There are a lot of independent schools out there without any oversight holding them to high standards.

That is where the Association of Colorado Independent Schools (ACIS) comes in. ACIS is a formally recognized accrediting agency by the International Council for Advancing Independent School Accreditation (ICAISA). The organization was founded in 1957 and today helps its member schools to develop and deliver excellence in education.

What is Accreditation, and What Isn't It?

Accreditation is a review process to determine if a school meets defined standards of quality. Once achieved, accreditation is not permanent—it is renewed periodically to ensure that the quality of the educational program is maintained.

Accreditation does not mean that the school has passed its governing structure on to the accrediting body. For example, ACIS does not in any way “run” Escuela de Guadalupe, and they have no authority to make decisions for our community. We still operate on a President/Principal model with a Board of Trustees overseeing the strategic operations of the school. ACIS is never involved in day-to-day operations or decisions.

Why Does Accreditation Matter?

Colorado has few regulations for non-public schools at the K-12 level. No license or accreditation is required to operate such a school. With minimal governmental oversight, school accreditation offers one of the best ways for parents to differentiate among the variety of non-public schools in their area. Many parents limit their school search to those which have demonstrated sufficient quality and stability to earn accreditation. Escuela parents can be proud of the fact that their students are attending an ACIS accredited school.

Here are seven reasons why accreditation matters:

1) High Standards

ACIS schools follow a common set of rigorous standards that reflect the proven characteristics of good independent schools. Those standards are based on Principles of Good Practice of the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS). For detailed information see: <https://www.nais.org/learn/principles-of-good-practice/>.

2) Mission-Program Congruence

Accreditation by ACIS offers reasonable assurance that an independent school provides the character and quality of education claimed in its marketing materials.

3) Third-Party Accountability

The rigorous accreditation process of ACIS requires meaningful and comprehensive evaluation of the school by outside experts who validate strengths and hold school leaders accountable for addressing weaknesses. Periodic evaluation of the ACIS accreditation program by the International Council Advancing Independent School Accreditation (www.icaisa.org) supports continuous improvement by holding ACIS accountable for compliance with the ICAISA Criteria for Effective Independent School Accreditation Practices.

4) School Viability

ACIS accreditation offers reasonable assurance that a school is financially viable, with effective leadership to maintain long-term stability. That is important, because problems with governance or finance are the most common reasons for independent school failure.

5) Continuous Improvement

To maintain ACIS accreditation, school leaders must demonstrate an ongoing commitment to school improvement. Evidence of that commitment includes: ongoing curriculum development and teacher education, effective two-way communication with school families, and the use of learning assessments to guide program improvements.

6) College Admissions

For students at the high school level, school accreditation facilitates acceptance into college. Students from accredited schools often receive priority consideration, while those from unaccredited schools must provide special evidence to demonstrate their readiness for higher education.

7) Legal Compliance

Accreditation provides reasonable assurance that a school meets or exceeds relevant government regulations involving: health, fire, safety, sanitation, and other requirements.

For all of these reasons, Escuela de Guadalupe is extremely proud of its ACIS accreditation... and you can be, too!