

Indiana State Board of Education Request For Freeway School Accreditation

Board Date: June 7, 2017

School: Highland Christian School (C020)
Administrator: Robert D. Payne
Address: 3010 Ridge Road
Highland, IN 46322-2099
Grade Span: PK-8
Public/Private: Private

The following executive summary has been compiled by the Indiana Department of Education's Office of School Accountability. It includes information presented by the school in its petition for freeway accreditation.

Identity:

Highland Christian School was founded in 1909, and is governed by a ten member Board of Trustees recommended by its board and approved by the parents. Highland Christian School is also accredited by Christian Schools International and AdvancEd, both of which are accrediting bodies recognized by the State Board. The mission statement of the Highland Christian School is:

In order to honor God, we nurture and guide students to SEE the Father's creation, SENSE order in a world saved by Christ, and SERVE God through the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Highland Christian School's vision is for its students to be academically equipped, biblically grounded, and spiritually nurtured to impact the world for Christ.

A community once defined by the biblical beliefs and ethnocentric values inherent to the Dutch Christian Reformed heritage, Highland Christian School is now a diverse community of families in terms of social background, educational and work experiences, ethnicity, faith journeys, and economics.

The kindergarten through eighth grade student body of Highland Christian School resides in twenty different cities within a ten mile radius of Highland, Indiana. Highland Christian School serves an ethnically diverse student population, including Black, Multiracial and Hispanic students. Highland Christian School has seen a fairly steady enrollment over the past ten years, averaging 350 students.

Almost half of the students enrolled at Highland Christian School in the 2016 school year received pre-planned financial aid through the Tax Credit and Choice Scholarship Funds, which equals 33% of the school's 2016 tuition revenue. Further, Highland Christian School awarded \$27,666 of need-based tuition assistance.

Curriculum:

Highland Christian School has aligned its curriculum and instruction with the Indiana Academic Standards. Staff meets weekly to ensure students are meeting these rigorous standards.

The curriculum also reflects an integrated biblical perspective. All subjects are taught from an understanding that “the world, while created perfectly, has been damaged and is in need of the positive impact that our students can bring”.

Testing History:

Highland Christian School has consistently been above the state average in overall proficiency on the ISTEP+ assessment. The school received an overall letter grade of “B” (88.6 points) for the 2015-16 school year. Highland Christian School received an overall letter grade of “C” for the 2013-14 and 2014-15 school years. Please note that grades issued for the 2013-14 and 2014-15 school years were calculated based on the old accountability system, whereas the grade for 2015-16 was calculated on the new accountability system.

Below is a table of Highland Christian School’s overall proficiency rate as compared to the state’s overall proficiency rate for the past three years:

School Year	Highland Christian School Overall Proficiency Rate	Statewide Overall Proficiency Rate
2015-16	56.9%	51.6%
2014-15	57.7%	53.5%
2013-14	78.3%	74.0%

Staffing:

Highland Christian School has 25 staff members, 23 of which are full-time employees and two of which are part-time employees. All full-time employees either hold current licensure with the State of Indiana or the State of Illinois. Further, all staff has been subjected to a criminal background check.

Waiver Requests:

Highland Christian School requests suspension of the following statute:

- IC 20-26-12-24, Local curricular material selection

Considerations:

Highland Christian School is currently 28.1 points away from achieving the required minimum educational benefit of at least an overall proficiency rate of 85% at the end of the five year contract period. If the school sees an overall proficiency rate for 2017-18, the baseline year, consistent with its current overall proficiency rate, then Highland Christian School must increase its proficiency rate by at least 5.65 points annually to achieve required overall proficiency rate by the end of the five year contract period.

Recommendation:

Department and Board staffs jointly recommend full five year freeway accreditation for Highland Christian School.

Freeway Accreditation Petition for

Highland Christian School



May 17, 2017.

Robert D. Payne, Principal

I.

Association for Christian Instruction

3040 Ridge Road

Highland, Indiana

II.

Mission Statement: In order to honor God, we nurture and guide students to SEE the Father's creation, SENSE order in a world saved by Christ, and SERVE God through the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Vision Statement: Highland Christian School students will be academically equipped, biblically grounded and spiritually nurtured to impact the world for Christ.

Highland Christian School was founded in 1909. Ridge Road was a rutted dirt wagon path. Transportation of Highland students to the Munster Christian School (later Lansing Christian School) was accomplished with a horse drawn enclosed wagon for the 1907 and 1908 school years. In the 1909 school year, the Highland Christian School board filed for incorporation and Highland Christian School was formally incorporated on January 10, 1901 as The Association for Christian Instruction at Highland – still the legal name of the school.

A community once defined by the Biblical beliefs and ethnocentric values inherent to the Dutch Christian Reformed heritage, Highland Christian School is now a diverse community of families in terms of social background, educational and work experiences, ethnicity, faith journeys, and economics. While we welcome this diversity, it has required that we wrestle with and restate our expectations and goals in terms of objective Biblical principles and values rather than depend on the common understanding and traditional values of our founding community.

HCS is governed by a ten member Board of Trustees. Trustees are recommended by the Board and approved by the parents for three year terms. In addition to serving on the full board, trustees serve on the following committees: Education, Finance, Building and Grounds and Transportation. HCS is also supported by the Highland Christian School Foundation with assets in excess of \$3 million.

Highland Christian School students reside in 20 different cities within a 10 mile radius of Highland, Indiana. Ninety percent of our students come from Highland (20%), Hammond (16%), Gary (15%), Munster (8%), Griffith (7%), Schererville (7%), Merrillville (7%), Crown Point (5%), Dyer (4%), and Lansing, IL (3%).

Our K-8 student body is ethnically diverse and reflects of our local community demographics. Highland Christian School collects ethnicity data from families using State references. Families identify their

ethnicity as follows: White (59%), Black (24%), Multiracial (10%), Hispanic (7%), Asian (0%). Please note that we do have one family who reports Asian heritage.

The HCS physical plant is a beautifully maintained facility. It is fully air-conditioned with recently renovated rest-rooms. Grounds and playground equipment and gymnasium provide excellent opportunities for the physical development of our students.

48% of K-8 enrolled students in 2015-16 received pre-planned financial aid through the Tax Credit and Choice Scholarship Funds. This equals 33% of the 2015-16 tuition revenue. In addition to these funds, this year the school awarded \$27,666 need-based tuition assistance.

Ten Year Enrollment Data

Highland Christian School experienced a period of growth between 2005 and 2011. During these years we were aggressive in marketing within our local churches and community. In 2007, we addressed families who were not abiding by enrollment policies. This resulted in flat enrollment coming into 2008. Between the years 2010 and 2015, we have experienced the strain of change in leadership, personnel resources, and increased transiency in enrollment; specifically in the retention of new families and an early transition out at the middle grade levels.

Our enrollment is holding steady in the mid 300's.

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Actual	338	348	367	369	373	358	367	339	332	347	338
FTE	321.5	329	345.8	355.6	358.8	342.6	352	327.2	320.6	337.8	333.8

III.

Highland Christian School is a standards focused school. Curriculum and instruction decisions are based on the standards adopted by the State of Indiana. Following the Professional Learning Communities model, teachers meet weekly in interdependent teams to ensure that

students are meeting standards. Through team minutes, they report each week on the standards that they are assessing.

Highland Christian began aligning with the Indiana standards in 2012 and mapped them on Curriculum Trak software. Since the Fall of 2015 we have been focused on the 2014 Standards. Teachers present the standards in student friendly language which encourages the students to take ownership of their learning.

IV.

IREAD, ISTEP+ and WIDA are administered by licensed classroom teachers. Here is the Faculty Roster. Highland Christian hires only certified teachers. Teachers are recruited from Christian Colleges and from Christian Schools International. HCS has a stable faculty with only one part-time teacher being added next year.

Name (Last, First, MI)	Full-time (20 hrs. +) or Part-time	Year of Hire	Highest Degree	Certified	For certified- list state and area	Expiration Date of Certificate	Grade and/or Subject Taught	Criminal History Check?
ACHTERHOF, GAIL	Full-time	1996	BA	Illinois	Elementary	6/30/2017	Resource Room	YES
BROWN, SHIRLEEN	Full-time	1986	MA	Indiana	Elementary	7/19/2018	Kindergarten	YES
DE YOUNG, JULIE (FEIKEMA)	Full-time	2011	MA	Indiana	Elementary	6/13/2018	Fifth	YES
DE YOUNG, JULIE (KISTLER)	Full-time	2006	BA	Illinois	Elementary	6/30/2020	First	YES
EVERS, LAUREN	Part-time	2007	BA	Indiana	Elementary	2/09/2020	Art	YES
GROEN, JOYCE	Full-time	1999	MA	Indiana	Social Studies	1/05/2020	Lang. Arts/ Geog.	YES
HUIZENGA, VICKI	Full-time	2002	BA	Illinois	Elementary	6/30/2020	Sixth	YES
JABAAY, SARA	Full-time	2005	MA	Indiana	Elementary	5/16/2023	Fourth	YES
KROOSWYK, NEIL	Full-time	2014	BA	Illinois	Physical Ed.	6/30/2018	Physical Ed.	YES

MUSCH, LORRIE	Full-time	2006	BA	Illinois	Mathematics	6/30/2020	J.H. Math	YES
OTTE, JEANA	Full-	1984	BA	Indiana	Elementary	7/23/2018	First	YES

	time							
PAYNE, ROBERT	Full-time	2015	MA	Illinois	K-12	6/30/2018	Administrative	YES
POSTMA, STEPHANIE	Part-time	2016	BA	Purdue	6-12 ELA	4/11/18	ELA, History	YES
REYNHOUT, LAUREL	Full-time	2007	BA	Illinois	Elementary	6/30/2020	Second	YES
RINKENBERGER, MARK	Full-time	2012	BA	Indiana	Music	4/06/2017	Music, Band, Choir	YES
SCHEERINGA, PATRICIA	Full-time	1996	MA	Indiana	Elementary	8/11/2021	J.H. Lang. Arts	YES
SYLVESTER, JULIE	Full-time	2000	BA	Indiana	Elementary	10/05/2016	Third	YES
VAN BELLE, KAREN	Full-time	2007	BA	Indiana	Elementary	8/25/2025	Pre-School	YES
VANDER WOUDE, RICHARD	Full-time	1980	MA	Indiana	History	1/28/2020	J.H. Social Studies	YES
VAN DYKE, DEREK	Full-time	2008	BS	Indiana	Science	2/19/2018	J.H. Science	YES
VANT HOFF, KATHY	Full-time	2004	BA	Illinois	Elementary	6/30/2021	Resource Room	YES
VERKAIK, JOY	Full-time	2011	BA	Illinois	Elementary	6/30/2018	Second	YES
VREDEVELD-BROWN, KARIN	Full-time	1988	MA	Indiana	Elementary	3/22/2023	Admin./3rd	YES
WAGENAAR, SANDRA	Full-time	2004	BA	Indiana	Elementary	6/15/2020	Fourth	YES
ZANDSTRA, JUDY	Full-time	2005	BS	Indiana	Elementary	9/13/2020	Kindergarten	YES

V.
ISTEP+ Results
Math

GRADE	2013-14		2014-15		2015-16	
	# tested	% passed	# tested	% passed	# tested	% passed
3	37	81	40	64.3	42	66
4	34	81.8	37	71.4	39	68
5	32	90.6	38	72.2	38	79
6	37	83.3	33	54.8	33	45
7	35	88.6	38	45.9	32	59
8	36	72	35	58.8	39	47

Reading

GRADE	2013-14		2014-15		2015-16	
	# tested	% passed	# tested	% passed	# tested	% passed
3	37	86.5	40	85.7	42	80
4	34	81.8	37	76.5	39	62
5	32	87.5	38	75	38	84
6	37	72.2	33	74.2	33	76
7	35	88.6	38	75.7	32	88
8	36	84	35	85.3	39	79

VI.

While we only go through 8th Grade, all of our students are on diploma track. HCS students are able to complete Algebra I and Spanish I before going on to high school.

VII.

- a. After several years of a 'C' rating on the state report card, for the 2015-16 year we rose to a high 'B'. We scored 104.4 points out of 100 points for Overall Growth. Our current pass rate for Math is 62.6% and for English Language Arts is 75.7%. We received 107.9 points for growth last year and we will continue the practices of targeted instruction and multi-tiered systems of support to see continued growth to meet the 85% goal.
- b. The goal of the school is "70 @ 70". By that we mean that our goal is for at least 70% of our students to score at the 70th percentile on the MAP Assessments for math and reading, to ensure that they are prepared to achieve a 24 on the ACT. In the Fall of this year, 48% of our students were at the 70th percentile in math and 53% of our students were at the 70th percentile in reading. By winter, we had risen to 55% in math and 64% in reading.

Attendance Rate

GRADE	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
K	96.8	95.8	96.5
1	96.6	95.4	96.7

2	97.4	96.2	96.7
3	97.9	95.5	96.9
4	97.7	96.9	96.9
5	97,9	96.5	96.7
6	97,9	97	96.8
7	97.6	97.1	96.9
8	97.9	96.9	97.5
TOTAL	99.5	96.4	96.9

We maintain this attendance rate through regular communication with parents. Those who start to miss school must meet with the Education Committee of the Board to rectify the situation.

VIII.

Regular morning announcements by the principal set the tone for the day and focus in on respect and other character qualities that make for a safe and orderly learning environment. Here is an example of a week's announcements:

Monday 13	Thought – ST Patrick's prayer. Announcements Birthdays Cullen Huisman, Christian Garza Lunch Chicken nuggets
Tuesday	Thought – Tonight is the band concert for our Junior High students. Have you ever thought about what a gift music is? How about art? Stories? Math? Math?? Yes – all of your subjects are gifts from God! Try looking at them like that today. Announcements Birthdays Jenna Norman, Jackson Armandariz, Jackson Turner. Lunch Pancake Wrap
Wednesday	Thought – Well I told you that last night was going to be the Band Concert – and it was terrific! What was really fun was to see students who often only meet in competition, playing together in one huge band – it reminded me of how much God likes it when we work well together. Psalm 133:1 says: How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity! Do you want to please God today – be nice to the people around you. Announcements Birthdays Allyana Vela Lunch Chicken Legs & Mashed Potatoes
Thursday	So I had a couple of students in my office yesterday and I asked them if they listened to me in the morning. Apparently Birthdays is the most important piece of news as they already know what the lunch is. Devotions – maybe they were being kind – they said THEY listened! So if I want you to listen – I need to be memorable. Last night Mr. Krooswyck and I went for some good training on how to handle difficult situations. You know what I learned?

	Jesus was right all along – treat people the way you want them to act – it works. If someone is angry – be calm. If someone is mean – be nice. Try it. Oh yes – Thursday. Pizza. Enjoy. Birthdays? Apparently no one at HCS was born on March 16 of any year.
Friday	Thought – Well here we are- Friday again. Friday’s are important to us aren’t they? TGIF is even a restaurant. Do you know why they are important? Because God knew we would need to rest – and so we have Sabbaths which grew into weekends. Last Friday, I encouraged you to listen to your pastor’s sermon to think about how it could help you with your work. Today, I encourage you to think – how could you use Saturday to get ready for Monday, so Sunday, you could rest and be refreshed for Monday – which incidentally starts our last week of 3 rd quarter! Announcements Birthdays Myles Miller, Jason Riley Weekend – Kendra Eningenerg, Juda Wells Lunch Chili Dog or Turkey Dog

Chapel services are student led and encourage students to treat each other in positive ways. Most Chapel Services are conducted by the Junior High Leadership Team. Elementary chapels are led by classes and take place once per month.

Other opportunities include but are not limited to:

- Handwashing in pre-school;
- Digital citizenship training;
- Abstinence and prevention of STDs in Bible class;
- Hygiene in Elementary Health Classes and Junior High PE;
- Drug and alcohol use prevention in Junior High Science and Bible classes.
- As our vision statement says, we want our students to live impactful lives and we stress to them that this begins now.

The curriculum at Highland Christian School reflects an integrated Biblical perspective. All subjects are taught from an understanding that this world, while created perfectly, has been damaged and is in need of the positive impact that our students can bring.

IX.

IC – 20 – 26 – 12 – 24 The flexibility to choose textbooks is necessary for Highland Christian to fulfill its mission and purpose.

X.

Teachers at HCS are committed to integrating technology into their instruction and assessment. Our learning management system provides the opportunity for teachers to include their instruction on our website. Students grow in their ability to use technology by meeting class requirements electronically and by collaborating with peers. Here are a few examples of how technology is integrated into instruction at HCS:

- Students and teachers are in the process of meeting ISTE (International Standards for Technology Education) requirements;
- Students complete the learning.com curriculum for technology skills. Beginning in Kindergarten students follow a curriculum that prepares them to use word processing, spreadsheets, and presentation tools in their classes;
- Students use IXL and Khan Academy for targeted instruction;
- Common formative assessments are given on Ipads to provide immediate feedback to students;
- Following the SAMR model, teachers are given instruction on how to ensure that technology is used in a transformative way in their classrooms. SAMR is an acronym showing increasing levels of technology use – Substitution, Augmentation, Modification and Redefinition. The goal is to ensure that technology supports the 21st century learning needs of HCS students;
- With the 1:1 macbook initiative in the Junior High and class sets of I-pads in the K-5 classes, students produce original works to show what they have learned.

XI.

Lawrence Lazotte states that a safe and orderly environment is one of the correlates of effective education. We first ensure a safe and orderly environment by clearly communicating expectations to the students. These expectations are on attractive posters prominently displayed in every classroom:

- Prepared – We come to class physically (attired and equipped), spiritually (with a Christ-like attitude), and mentally prepared to learn.
- Responsible – We take responsibility for our own learning by meeting class requirements on time and only take credit for our own work.
- Engaged – We are aware of our progress, seek to do our best and seek help when it's needed.
- Aware – We value learning, and behave toward staff and students in a way that promotes learning at HCS.

We respond to incidents that violate these standards according to a rubric that states violations and includes increasing consequences for repeated violations. This rubric is shared with parents and guardians in the Student/Parent Handbook which is prepared each summer and is available either as a hard copy or on line. Parents indicate their support of these expectations upon enrollment each year.

A safe and orderly environment is also provided by adherence to state requirements for background checks for all hires and for volunteers with regular contact with students. The building is secured and visitors must report to the front office upon arrival to be checked in and out. A safe and orderly recess experience is ensured by always having two adults with the students.

XII.

The heart of staff development at HCS is job-embedded professional learning communities. Our monthly two hour late start allows for development which supports our learning goals. This year, the faculty studied the book Kid by Kid, Skill by Skill. Topic that we have studied this year include: practices of a professional learning community, working in collaborative teams, classroom management, and a focus on results. Next year our focus will be on assessment and culture. For assessment, teachers will study Formative Assessment and Standards-Based Grading by Marzano. Future studies will focus on school climate (Roadmap to Responsibility) and continual professional development (Teach Like a Champion). In addition to the full faculty Late Start meetings, teachers have weekly team meetings to ensure that standards are driving instruction and to share results of formative assessments.

In addition to these on-site development opportunities, teachers attended many off-site courses and conferences including: Professional Learning Communities, Project Lead the Way, ISTE (Technology), Early Childhood, Dealing with Defiant Students, NWEA MAP Training and 21st Century Learning.

XIII.

The calendar for school year 2017-18 is attached. It provides for 182 days of instruction. The two extra days are there to ensure adequate instructional days in the event that school is missed for things like inclement weather. Not included in the 182 days are two days of In-service at the beginning of the year, and two days at the end of the year, two days in October for teachers to attend the Christian Educators Association Convention and one day in February for an area-wide professional development day which will likely focus on technology integration this year.

XIV.

All data reports are filed electronically . A staff member's time is dedicated to the timely and accurate submission of data to DOE. All reports necessary to assessment have been done correctly and on time. Data is reviewed by the Business Manager and Principal before submission.

