EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA
AFFILIATED SCHOOLS

CRITERIA AND PROCEDURES

For Schools Sponsored by More Than One ELCA Congregation Or by an Association of at Least One ELCA Congregation and Congregations of Other Church Bodies[1]

EDUCATION, CHRISTIAN NURTURE AND EVANGELISM THROUGH ELCA LUTHERAN SCHOOLS

In response to the commitment of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) to be in mission in education, the Division for Higher Education and Schools (DHES) encourages congregations to serve their communities through Lutheran schools, providing quality education and Christian nurture, and, through this ministry, to engage the community with the gospel of Christ.

SCHOOL AFFILIATION DEFINED

Affiliation is the means by which the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America - Division for Higher Education and Schools establishes and maintains a relationship with schools which are owned and operated by an association consisting of more than one ELCA congregation, or by an association of at least one ELCA congregation and congregations of other church bodies. Through affiliation the ELCA identifies the school as one whose nature, mission and ministry is consistent with the **Confession of Faith, Nature of the Church, and Statement of Purpose** of the ELCA as stated in Chapters 2, 3, and 4 of the ELCA constitution. Church affiliation of a school signifies commitment to a relationship between the school, the member congregations, the local synod, DHES, and other ELCA Congregation Schools and ELCA Affiliated Schools.

To be considered for ELCA affiliation, the school must be a not-for-profit corporation in which at least one ELCA congregation functions as a corporation member.

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[1] Other Lutheran church bodies and church bodies with whom the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is in fellowship.

Note: If a single congregation sponsors a school, its ELCA identity is with the congregation and does not require an affiliation process.

BENEFITS OF AFFILIATION

Being an affiliated school most importantly identifies the mission and purpose of the school in the context of the church. Affiliation, first and foremost, speaks to the question of "who we are and what we are to do as the people of God in this school." In being the church through an affiliated school, there are certain benefits available to that school. Following is a list of benefits. The list is not exhaustive as the services and opportunities available to schools of the ELCA change and increase on a regular basis.

1. DHES advocates for ELCA congregation schools and centers and ELCA Affiliated Schools. It provides services through its Department for Schools and through cooperation with the Evangelical Lutheran Education Association (ELEA), Council for American Private Education (CAPE) and other partner associations and organizations.

2. Affiliated schools are listed and identified as ministries of ELCA congregations in the ELCA Yearbook and web-based school locator (www.lutheran-schools.com), and other appropriate documents and listings.

3. ELCA rostered teachers and administrators receive a call or commission from the Synod Council[2].

4. Affiliated Schools are eligible to sponsor employees under the currently available ELCA Pension and Benefits Program (which includes pension, disability, survivor, medical, dental benefits and other benefits which may currently be offered or available).

5. Inclusion on the ELCA group exemption list recognized by the Internal Revenue Service (in the case of the school not receiving its own 501(c)(3) ruling). An additional form is required and may be obtained from the Department for Schools.

6. Participation in the ELCA Department for Schools Teacher Clearinghouse.

7. Participation and eligibility in the Founders Grant, international teacher exchange, Make a Difference Fund and other programs funded or sponsored by the ELCA Department for Schools.

8. Participation through the Department for Schools in the National Distinguished Principal, Blue Ribbon School and other programs sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education.

9. Eligibility for loans from the ELCA Mission Investment Fund

10. Eligible to access ELCA services and programs including the ELCA Foundation.

11. DHES includes ELCA Affiliated Schools on eligibility lists for Aid Association for Lutherans (AAL) and Lutheran Brotherhood grant and funding programs.

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[2] This includes commissioned associates in ministry, diaconal ministers, or ordained pastors. For more information regarding the candidacy and approval process, contact the Division for Ministry or your synod office.

REQUIREMENTS FOR AFF1LIATlON

The corporate membership must include Lutheran congregations and/or congregations from church bodies with whom the ELCA is in fellowship. At least one corporate member must be an ELCA congregation.

The school's governing documents must contain the following provisions:

1. that the proportion of ELCA representation on the governing board be at least proportionate to the ELCA corporate members in the total corporate membership;

2. that the corporation be fully responsible for the management and fiscal affairs of the corporation and fully responsible for any debts and liabilities which may be incurred by the corporation;

3. that ELCA affiliate status not cause the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in its churchwide or synodical expressions to incur or be subject to the liabilities or debts of the corporation;

4. that in the event of dissolution of the corporation the assets, after payment of all debts, be distributed to one or more of the following, provided they are 501(c)(3) entities: a) the corporate members by such formula as they shall agree upon; b) the ELCA Schools Endowment or Founders Grant Fund; c) the ELEA School Extension Fund; or d) another Lutheran school. (Dissolution Clause should be in the constitution or by-laws.)

Other Affiliation requirements include:

A. a board resolution of intent to be affiliated with the ELCA;
B. a statement of mission and purpose consistent with the Confession of Faith, Nature of the Church, and Statement of Purpose of the ELCA as stated in Chapters 2, 3, and 4 of the ELCA constitution;
C. evidence of meeting professional educational standards of performance;[3]
D. equitable personnel policies;
E. a tax-exempt ruling from the IRS as a 501(c)(3) organization, or inclusion on the ELCA group exemption list or the group exemption list of another Lutheran church;
F. compliance with applicable federal, state and local licensing and reporting requirements;
G. filing the annual IRS Racial Nondiscrimination form #5578 in compliance with IRS rulings for 501(c)(3) schools (available at www.lutheran-schools.com);
H. compliance with the call/commissioning procedures of the ELCA for teachers and administrators who serve on the official roster of the ELCA as pastors, associates in ministry, diaconal ministers and deaconesses;
I. participation by clergy and laity of each church body in leadership of school worship;
J. affirmation of human diversity and the intention to create a multicultural environment.
K. that notice be given to the ELCA Director for Schools of any change in corporate membership and proposed changes in the school's mission statement, articles of incorporation, constitution, or bylaws that relate to the requirements for affiliation.

[3] DHES gives strong encouragement to schools to seek accreditation through Lutheran professional associations, such as ELEA, and through regional accrediting bodies, such as North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Western Association of Schools and Colleges.

PROVISIONAL AFFILIATION

Upon recommendation of the Director for Schools and subject to the approval of the DHES board, provisional ELCA affiliation will be granted for a period of one year to those schools which comply with most of the requirements for affiliation, but need time to make adjustments to meet all requirements. Provisional affiliation may be extended upon the recommendation of the Director for Schools and the approval of the DHES board.

PROCEDURES FOR AFFILIATION

1. The school governing board notifies the ELCA Director for Schools in writing of its desire to affiliate and attach a copy of the board action to make such request.

2. The following documents should be sent to the ELCA Director for Schools:

   a) Mission Statement
   b) Articles of Incorporation
   c) Constitution and Bylaws
   d) Brief historical statement about the school and publicity materials
   e) Names and addresses of congregation corporate members and their church body affiliation
   f) Name, address, and phone numbers of contact persons for each corporate member congregation
   g) List of current board of directors, including corporate congregation represented, if applicable
   h) Copy of incorporation document (include Tax Exemption Letter from IRS if the association has obtained an independent 501(c)(3) ruling))
   i) Position Description for chief administrator

3. If a portion of the corporation members are congregations of a church body other than ELCA, provide a photocopy of any official recognition received from that body.

4. An affiliated school will be included in the ELCA group exemption (upon written request on the ELCA prescribed form available from the Department for Schools. Any school that has applied for or has received a determination letter directly from the IRS does not need and is therefore not eligible for inclusion in the ELCA group exemption

5. If all of the above requirements are met, a recommendation to grant affiliation will be made to the DHES board. If portions of the requirements are not met, the school will be contacted and the remaining requirements clearly defined. Upon agreement between the Director for Schools and the school, a recommendation for provisional affiliation may be made to the DHES board to allow time for complete compliance with the requirements.

Following the DHES board action, the school and synod will be notified of the decision.

MUTUAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR MAINTAINING AFFILIATION RELATIONSHIP

DHES will communicate with ELCA Affiliated Schools through regular print and electronic methods. The school will inform DHES of significant changes and important events at the school.

DHES will promote teaching in an ELCA Affiliated School through providing information and encouraging recruitment of Lutheran School teacher candidates at ELCA colleges and universities. The school will be encouraged to list teaching and administrator vacancies in the Teacher Clearinghouse (www.lutheran-schools.com).

DHES will encourage ELCA Affiliated Schools to join the Evangelical Lutheran Education Association (ELEA) and secondary schools to join the Association of Lutheran Secondary Schools.

TERMINATION OF AFFILIATION RELATIONSHIP

1. If the school fails to meet the requirements of the affiliation relationship, or if it indicates through its actions that it is not committed to the mission and ministry of this church, ELCA affiliation may be reviewed by DHES staff for consideration of terminating the affiliation. Upon recommendation by the ELCA Director for Schools, the DHES board may vote to terminate ELCA affiliation for the school. If termination is proposed DHES shall notify the school, its corporation members, and the office of the ELCA synod in which the school operates at least sixty days prior to the intended action. The school may appeal to the DHES board to reconsider this action.

2. The school may terminate affiliation through action of its board of directors if it no longer desires to participate in affiliation with the ELCA. If such action is intended, the proposed resolution for ending the affiliation relationship will be submitted to the corporation members, the office of the ELCA synod in which the school operates, and the DHES at least sixty days prior to the intended action. The DHES board would receive this resolution and accept it on the recommendation of the ELCA Director t for Schools.

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