

## What Happens When A School District Becomes Unaccredited?

Pursuant to state law the State Board of Education classifies (accredits) public school districts. Under the standards of the Missouri School Improvement Program (MSIP), a school district may be given one of three ratings: accredited, provisionally accredited, or unaccredited. A provisionally accredited district is still considered to be accredited. State law defines the consequences for a school district that becomes unaccredited. The date that the loss of accreditation becomes effective is set by the State Board of Education. If no effective date is set by the State Board, the action becomes effective on the date of the board action.

### **May students transfer from an unaccredited district to another district?**

Mo. Rev. Stat. §167.131 provides that an unaccredited school district must pay tuition for students transferring to an accredited school district, and that the receiving district must accept those students. Application of this law has been litigated in two cases, Breitenfeld, et al. v. School District of Clayton and Blue Springs School District, et al. v. School District of Kansas City, Missouri. In both cases, the Missouri Supreme Court has affirmed the right of students to transfer to an accredited school district. Families residing in an unaccredited school district and wishing to transfer should contact school officials in the accredited district to which they wish to enroll to determine how the district is implementing these rulings.

### **Does unaccredited status affect students' diplomas?**

Students who graduate from an unaccredited school district still receive diplomas.

### **What about admission to college?**

Higher education institutions typically consider multiple sources of information (transcript, ACT/SAT score, portfolio, recommendations, etc.) when determining whether to admit a student. The Department has not identified any instance where a student who graduated from an unaccredited school district has been disqualified from consideration for admission. However, higher education institutions set their own policies and criteria for admissions. Families should contact the admissions office at the institution under consideration to determine that program's policy.

### **What about eligibility for scholarships?**

An unaccredited district classification does not reflect the qualifications or accomplishments of any individual student. Students who graduate from an unaccredited school district should be eligible for any scholarship for which they would otherwise qualify. As with school admission, families should contact the financial aid office of any program under consideration.

### **What about eligibility for extracurricular activities?**

Eligibility for interscholastic activities for most schools is determined by the Missouri State High School Activities Association (MSHSAA). MSHSAA By-Law 3.10.4 provides that students who transfer schools or do not meet the requirements for residency upon enrollment at the school are ineligible for 365 days unless they meet one or more exceptions. Exception 4 relates to students transferring from an unaccredited public school:

*A student may be eligible upon his or her first transfer from an unaccredited public school to an accredited public school where the student's tuition is required by state law to be paid by the home district provided the transfer does not involve undue influence and is not for athletic reasons. Likewise, a student may be eligible upon his/her first transfer back to his/her home school if the school regains accreditation provided: 1. the student transfers within 365 days of accreditation being regained and 2. the transfer does not involve undue influence and is not for athletic reasons.*

For more information regarding eligibility contact Missouri State High School Activities Association, P.O. Box 1328, Columbia, MO 65205-1328, phone: (573) 875-4880, fax: (573) 875-1450, email: [email@mshsaa.org](mailto:email@mshsaa.org).