



# ANSAA Member Newsletter

Arkansas Nonpublic School Accrediting Association  
2209 South 18<sup>th</sup> Place - Rogers, AR 72758  
479-246-0032

August 1, 2023

## INSIDE ISSUE

### 1 Welcome Back

ANSAA Board  
Members & New  
ANSAA Staff

New ANSAA  
Administrators

### 2 Congratulations Newly Accredited Schools

NFNSSAA

CAPE

ANSAA's Mission  
and Advocacy Work

### 3 ANSAA Site Visits 2023- 2024

ANSAA Summer /  
Fall Workshops

NEW ANSAA 2023-  
2024 Policy Manual

NEW ANSAA Self-  
Study

Federal Funds

### 4 AAA Rulings

Arkansas  
Legislation

### 5 ANSAA Annual Report

On behalf of the ANSAA Board of Directors, we welcome you to the 2023-2024 school year. We are pleased to have you as part of our association, and we look forward to supporting your school community in providing quality education to Arkansas students.

## ANSAA Board Members and New ANSAA Staff

### ANSAA Officers 2023-2024:

President / Matt Dempsey

Vice President / Sharon Stewart

Secretary / Michelle Ward

Treasurer / Theresa Hall

### ANSAA Board Members Re-elected for Three Year Terms

Board Position #7 – Gary Arnold

Board Position #8 – Sharon Stewart

Board Position #9 – Matt Dempsey

Board Position #10 – Michelle Ward

### ANSAA Board Members Currently Serving

Position #1 Theresa Hall 2021-24

Position #6 Sharon Blentlinger 2022-25

Position #2 Greg Jones 2021-24

Position #7 Gary Arnold 2023-26

Position #3 Justin Moseley 2021-24

Position #8 Sharon Stewart 2023-26

Position #4 Mary Alice Brooks 2022-25

Position #9 Matt Dempsey 2023-26

Position #5 Ileana Dobbins 2022-25

Position #10 Michelle Ward 2023-26

### WELCOME ANSAA Associate Director, Amber Moore

We look forward to introducing Amber to you at upcoming ANSAA events.

## New ANSAA Chief Administrators for 2023-2024

ANSAA welcomes all new chief administrators listed below and all other new administrators at various levels to the organization. All new administrators are invited to attend a *virtual* ANSAA Orientation on Tuesday, September 12, 2023, from 10:00-11:30 am.

Agape Academy, Little Rock  
Cabot Christian School, Cabot  
Central Christian Schools, North Little Rock  
Christ Academy, Newport  
Immaculate Conception School, Fort Smith  
Joshua Academy, Van Buren  
Little Rock Christian Academy, Little Rock  
North Little Rock Catholic Academy, North Little Rock  
North River Christian Academy, North Little Rock  
Pulaski Academy, Little Rock  
Russellville Baptist Academy, Russellville  
St. Michael's Catholic School, West Memphis

Christen Sanders, Principal  
Travis Larison, President  
Andrew Stewart, President  
Nyasha Greer, Principal  
Katie Hall, Principal  
Kara Witzke, Head of School  
Justin Smith, Head of School  
Melody Sharp, Principal  
Tammy Fletcher, Head of School  
Rachel Deems, Head of School  
Jenny Posey, Director  
Michael Beauregard, Principal

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**“The mission of the Arkansas Nonpublic School Accrediting Association (ANSAA) is to maintain and enhance the quality of education within our diverse member schools through assessment, accountability, and internal review. Using a process of self-study and professional site visits, ANSAA schools demonstrate compliance with established standards which are designed to support ongoing improvement.”**

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# Congratulations!

## Schools Completing ANSAA Accreditation in 2022-2023

### **ANSAA Renewals:**

Abundant Life Christian Academy (K-12), Sherwood  
Immaculate Heart of March School (K-8), North Little Rock

Joshua Townsend, Head of School  
Brenda Hiegel, Principal

### **Dual Accreditation Renewals:**

Central AR Christian School, Inc., North Little Rock  
Columbia Christian School, Magnolia  
Harding Academy (K-12), Searcy  
Little Rock Christian Academy (K-12), Little Rock  
The New School (K-12), Fayetteville

Andrew Stewart, President  
Jimmy Walker, Superintendent  
Jim Gurchiek, Superintendent  
Justin Smith, Head of School  
Nancy Lang, Head of School

## National Federation of Nonpublic School State Accrediting Associations (NFSSAA)

The annual meeting for NFSSAA was held on June 14-15, 2023, in Detroit, MI. The meeting focused on state membership reports, and a discussion regarding the landscape of accreditation in each state focusing on association priorities, political factors, economic climate, technology factors, customer needs, uncertainties, and other trends. The following states were in attendance: Arkansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, and Wisconsin. More information can be found at [www.nfnssaa.com](http://www.nfnssaa.com).

## Council for Private Education (CAPE)

The annual State CAPE Network (SCN) meeting was held on July 19-11, 2023, in Asheville, NC. The meeting focused on coalition building, legal hot topics, amicus briefs, educational landscape, early learning, private school participation in NAEP, and the accreditation landscape. Arkansas nonpublic schools were represented in the meeting by Kristine Grelle, AR SCN representative.

*Bring attention to your school's accreditation and national recognition by adding links to your school's website and promotional materials that include ANSAA ([ansaa.com](http://ansaa.com)), NFSSAA ([nfnssaa.com](http://nfnssaa.com)), and CAPE ([capenet.org](http://capenet.org)). Your school is a member of both national organizations through ANSAA.*

## ANSAA's Mission and Advocacy Work

"The mission of the Arkansas Nonpublic School Accrediting Association (ANSAA) is to maintain and enhance the quality of education within our diverse member schools through assessment, accountability, and internal review. Using a process of self-study and professional site visits, ANSAA schools demonstrate compliance with established standards which are designed to support ongoing improvement." The ANSAA Board of Directors would like to invite each school to consider donating towards the advocacy work of ANSAA that extends beyond its mission. These efforts include working with the Arkansas Department of Education to provide professional development, national and state recognition and verification of our accredited schools, clarification of regulations and state laws pertaining to private schools, and inclusion in state programs such as non-traditional licensure and Education Freedom Accounts. Additionally, ANSAA works with national organizations such as NFSSAA and CAPE to provide schools with national networking acknowledgement. Throughout the past several years, a lot of effort was made to provide continuous information regarding legislation related to federal programs including ESSER, GEER, EANS, and LEARNS. These efforts require a financial commitment, which has been offset by pursuing ANSAA Corporate Sponsorships. If your school would like to contribute, please include your donation on the "Annual Membership Application & Fees" Form.

## ANSAA Site Visit Dates 2023-2024

### ANSAA Renewals:

Fayetteville Christian School (K-12), Fayetteville	December 3-5, 2023
North Little Rock Catholic Academy (K-8), NLR	October 15-17, 2023
Trinity Catholic School, (6-8), Fort Smith	October 22-24, 2023

### Dual Accreditation Renewals:

Christ Little Rock (K-8), Little Rock	Spring 2024
Life Way Christian School (K-12), Centerton	October 29-Nov. 1, 2023
Ridgefield Christian School (K-12), Jonesboro	Spring 2024

## ANSAA Summer / Fall Workshops

August 2023 keynote speaker Tina Boogren will present, “Motivating and Inspiring Students” (full description at [www.ansaa.com](http://www.ansaa.com)). Schools registered in spring 2023 to attend; the training will take place on the following days and times:

- August 10, 2023, at Mount Sequoyah, Fayetteville / 8:00-11:00
- August 10, 2023, at Mount Sequoyah, Fayetteville / 11:30-2:30
- August 11, 2023, at Pulaski Academy, Little Rock / 8:00-11:00
- August 11, 2023, at Pulaski Academy, Little Rock / 11:30-2:30

ANSAA has also organized a workshop for educational leaders and educators training to become administrators on Friday, September 19, 2023, from 9:00-3:30 at St. John’s Center in Little Rock. Keynote speakers Kristen Hays and Diane Metz will present, “Building a Culture of Achievement”. The description for the presentation can be found on [www.ansaa.com](http://www.ansaa.com). Contact the ANSAA office (kristine.grelle@cox.net or 479-246-0032) to request a registration form, which is due September 2, 2023.

<b>2023-2024 ANSAA Events:</b> <b>Tuesday, Sept. 12</b> New Admin. Orientation <b>Monday, Sept. 18</b> ANSAA Board Meeting <b>Monday, Nov. 13</b> ANSAA Board Meeting <b>Tuesday, Nov. 14</b> ANSAA Annual Meeting <b>Monday, February 26</b> ANSAA Board Meeting <b>Monday, June 10</b> ANSAA Board Meeting <b>Summer 2024</b> NFNSSAA Annual Meeting State CAPE Meeting
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## Important Updates

### NEW ANSAA 2023-2024 Policy Manual

The ANSAA Board of Directors approved a reorganization of the ANSAA Policy Manual. The previous manual included twelve standard areas whereas the new document contains seven. Although some standards have been combined and rewritten for clarification, there are no changes in the mandatory requirements.

### NEW ANSAA Self-Study

The 2023 Edition of the ANSAA Self-Study has revised to reflect the new reorganization of the standards found in the ANSAA Policy Manual, Edition 2023. Any school interested in obtaining a copy of the self-study or scheduling staff training on the use of the instrument should contact Kristine Grelle at 479-246-0032 or [kristine.grelle@cox.net](mailto:kristine.grelle@cox.net).

### Federal Funds

**EANS I (CRSSA)** - As of June 2023, over \$12M of the \$18M designated for ANSAA participating member schools has been used. The deadline to use these funds is September 30, 2023.

**EANS II (ARP)** – As of June 2023, about \$700,00 of the \$2.6M allocation has been used by the eleven schools that qualified for these funds which expire in September 2024.

A NEW grant using funds reverted from EANS to GEER has been made available for schools that did not qualify originally for EANS 2 because they took a PPP loan or didn’t meet the poverty level stipulated in the grant. Applications for non-public school participation in the ARP-EANS program are now available [here](#). The deadline for applying is Friday, August 4, 2023.

More information can be found at: <https://dese.ade.arkansas.gov/Offices/public-school-accountability/federal-programs/emergency-assistance-for-non-public-school-eans-program>. You can also contact the ANSAA office for more information or send specific requests for assistance to [lindsey.stroud@ade.arkansas.gov](mailto:lindsey.stroud@ade.arkansas.gov) or [elizabeth.Gomez@ade.arkansas.gov](mailto:elizabeth.Gomez@ade.arkansas.gov).

## Arkansas Activities Association / AAA

The AAA Governing Body Meeting was held on July 24, 2023. The focus of the meeting was to consider the following six proposals to amend the AAA Constitution and Bylaws which were voted on by the state membership.

<b>Proposal No. 1 / Jr. High Travel</b>	<b>* Passed</b>
To allow junior high schools more flexibility in scheduling games to fulfill a season.	
<b>Proposal No. 2 / Coaches Education – Employment</b>	<b>* Passed</b>
To give licensed teachers more flexibility.	
<b>Proposal No. 3 / Financial Aid – Service Providers</b>	<b>* Passed</b>
To evaluate the existing financial aid third party service providers – expand options for nonpublic schools to coordinate financial aid assistance.	
<b>Proposal No. 4 / Electronic Distribution</b>	<b>* Passed</b>
To promote more effective, timely communication concerning official AAA business.	
<b>Proposal No. 5 / Non-Athletic Activities – National Contests/Events</b>	<b>* Passed</b>
To provide clarity on activities groups attending national level contests and events due to the discontinuation of the NASSP list.	
<b>Proposal No. 6 / 4A Baseball, Basketball, Softball Conferences</b>	<b>* Passed</b>
To provide more opportunities to reduce travel, increase regional/state participation.	
<b>Proposal No. 7 / NEW Competitive Equity – Football</b>	<b>* Passed</b>
To allow for an even number in each football conference in addition to reevaluation classification limits by enrollment.	
<b>Proposal No. 8 / Competitive Equity – 2 Year Lookback</b>	<b>* Passed</b>
To effectively administer the Competitive Equity Factor Plan on a consistent two-year basis for nonpublic schools instead of a four-year basis.	

## Arkansas Legislation

The Regular Session of the 94<sup>th</sup> General Assembly was a busy one. At the forefront of many of the minds of nonpublic schools is the impact of [Act 237](#) known as the LEARNS Act. Included in the law is the opportunity to participate in Education Freedom Accounts which provides funding up to 90% of the State’s prior year per-student foundation funding amount, up to around \$6,600 for the 2023-2024 school year. More information for school participation can be [here](#) and information for student participation can be found [here](#). This [handbook](#) provides additional details about the program.

Below are additional bills that have been passed by legislators this session that will impact nonpublic schools in Arkansas. The full text of the bills waiting on Governor Sanders’ signature and the Act that has already been signed are linked to each for your convenience.

- [Act 286](#) – Requires private (and public) schools to have at least two employees trained for implementation of a student seizure action plan by the 2024-2025 school year.
- [Act 669](#) – Allows qualifying students to receive funds from both the Arkansas Children’s Educational Freedom Account and the Philanthropic Investment in Arkansas Kids programs.
- [Act 732](#) – Amends laws related to teacher licensure, including qualifications for obtaining a license and the length of time that a provisional teaching license is valid.
- [Act 737](#) – Requires automated external defibrillators (AEDs) at school-sponsored sporting events for grades 7-12.
- [Act 748](#) – Defines athletic participation for homeless students and allows soccer players to play both club and high school soccer at the same time.
- [Act 764](#) – Requires storm shelters for new construction at all educational facilities (includes private schools).
- [Act 787](#) – Requires all private (and public) schools to keep exterior doors closed and locked at all times other than transitions and provide a way for occupants to leave the building in case of a fire.
- [Act 792](#) – Arkansas Activities Association (AAA) registered volunteers of any educational entity must complete statewide and nationwide criminal records checks.
- [HR1081](#) – Strongly encourages private schools to participate in professional development courses on bullying in schools and recognizing and addressing child maltreatment issues.

## ***ANSAA Mandatory Reporting Information***

All forms for the 2023-24 ANSAA Annual Reports are listed on [ANSAA.com](http://ANSAA.com) with detailed instructions. Contact the ANSAA office (479-246-0032) if you need assistance with the forms. All forms have been updated, with some deletions and additions from previous years. Please do not alter the forms to fit a different format or use forms from previous years. Note that electronic filing is required for accredited schools.

### **Associate Schools Annual Reports:**

ANSAA Non-Accredited Associate Schools must include complete the Excel annual report (two tabs - Associate Schools Annual Membership Application and ANSAA Non-Accredited Associate Annual Report) and submit it electronically by September 15 to [kristine.grelle@cox.net](mailto:kristine.grelle@cox.net).

The following information must be attached to the email:

- ANSAA New Administrator Qualifications (if applicable)

### **Mail to ANSAA Office by September 15**

ANSAA Accredited Schools must mail a copy of the “Associate Schools Annual Membership Application & Fees” page from the Excel Electronic Annual Report along with applicable payments to:

*Kristine Grelle, ANSAA Executive Director  
2209 South 18<sup>th</sup> Place / Rogers, AR 72758*

If the forms and/or payments are submitted after the September 15<sup>th</sup> deadline, include a late fee of \$100.

### **E-Mail Addresses for Administrators & Directory**

ANSAA information will be sent to school administrators by e-mail. The Membership Application indicates the school e-mail address that will be listed in the ANSAA Directory. Under **Chief Executive Officer** on the membership form, include the e-mail addresses of other school administrators’ who need to receive ANSAA information. The new ANSAA Directory for 2023-2024 will be posted on ANSAA.com the first week in October after the review of all ANSAA Annual Reports.



### **Accredited Schools Annual Reports:**

All Accredited School Forms will be completed in Microsoft Excel. The complete Excel Annual Report must be submitted electronically by September 15 to [kristine.grelle@cox.net](mailto:kristine.grelle@cox.net).

The following information must also be attached to the email:

- ANSAA New Administrator Qualifications Form (if applicable)
- School’s Current Strategic Plan – only for schools applying for accreditation renewal; see list of schools below.
- ANSAA Financial Review Form - Audit letters are no longer required to be filed annually; however, every school must complete the ANSAA Financial Review Form.

### **Mail to ANSAA Office by September 15**

ANSAA Accredited Schools must mail a copy of the “Accredited Schools Annual Membership Application & Fees” page from the Excel Electronic Annual Report along with applicable payments to:

*Kristine Grelle, ANSAA Executive Director  
2209 South 18<sup>th</sup> Place / Rogers, AR 72758*

If the forms and/or payments are submitted after the September 15<sup>th</sup> deadline, include a late fee of \$100.

### **ANSAA Accreditation Renewal**

The following schools must apply for ANSAA Renewal during the 2023-2024 school year (due the fourth year of the seven-year cycle): Academy of Excellence, Eureka Springs; Christ the King School, Little Rock; Episcopal Collegiate School, Little Rock; Immaculate Conception School, Fort Smith; Our Lady of the Holy Souls School, Little Rock; St. Joseph School, Conway; St. Joseph Catholic School, Paris; and West Side Christian School, El Dorado.

Schools must include with the renewal form a \$100 filing fee and a copy of the school’s current Strategic Plan.