

Reinstatement of Licensure Exemption for Accredited Private Schools

Public authorities must see to it that public subsidies are so allocated that parents are truly free to exercise this right without incurring unjust burdens...The refusal to provide public economic support to non-public schools that need assistance and that render a service to civil society is to be considered an injustice. (*Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, 240*)

Church teaching

- ★ Children and young people must be helped, with the aid of the latest advances in psychology and the arts and science of teaching, to develop harmoniously their physical, moral and intellectual endowments so that they may gradually acquire a mature sense of responsibility in striving endlessly to form their own lives properly and in pursuing true freedom as they surmount the vicissitudes of life with courage and constancy. (*Pope Paul VI, Declaration on Christian Education*)
- ★ Since all Christians have become by rebirth of water and the Holy Spirit a new creature(8) so that they should be called and should be children of God, they have a right to a Christian education. A Christian education does not merely strive for the maturing of a human person as just now described, but has as its principal purpose this goal: that the baptized, while they are gradually introduced the knowledge of the mystery of salvation, become ever more aware of the gift of Faith they have received, and that they learn in addition how to worship God the Father in spirit and truth...(Pope Paul VI, *Declaration on Christian Education*)
- ★ The love which impels the Church to communicate to all people a sharing in the grace of divine life also causes her, through the effective action of her members, to pursue people's true temporal good, help them in their needs, provide for their education and promote an integral liberation from everything that hinders the development of individuals. The Church desires the good of man in all his dimensions, first of all as a member of the city of God, and then as a member of the earthly city. (*Instruction on Christian Freedom and Education*)

Resources

- ★ **Texas Catholic Conference** Education page (www.TXcatholic.org/ed.asp)
 - ★ **National Catholic Education Association (NCEA)** The NCEA provides leadership and service to American Catholic Educators (www.NCEA.org)
 - ★ **Texas Private School Accreditation Commission (TEPSAC)** (www.tepsac.org/)
 - ★ **Texas Association of Non-Public Schools (TANS)** (www.abouttans.org/)
 - ★ **Texas Education Agency (TEA)** (www.tea.state.tx.us/)
- (Last updated December 10, 2008)



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The Texas Catholic Conference supports reinstating the exemption of TEPSAC member agency accredited schools from licensure as child care providers because these schools already have guidelines regarding child care, and because the loss of their exemption, due to the passage of H.B. 1385 in the 80th Regular Session, was not the intent of the bill's authors.

Texas Private School Accreditation Commissionⁱ

For many years, the state of Texas accredited private schools as well as public schools. Limited resources, however, forced the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to stop performing this service for private schools. The Texas Association of Non-Public Schools –TANS-, wishing to maintain the benefits of state accreditation, worked out an agreement with the State Commissioner of Education to form a private accreditation commission that would recognize appropriate accrediting organizations. These standards of accreditation are comparable to TEA standards and preserve the integrity of the member organizations and the schools they accredit. This commission, called the Texas Private School Accreditation Commission, or TEPSAC, began operating in 1986.

Texas' Catholic elementary and secondary schools are accredited by the Texas Catholic Conference Accreditation Commission, a member agency of the Texas Private School Accreditation Commission (TEPSAC). The Texas Catholic Conference Accreditation Commission upholds standards comparable to state standards, including, but not limited to, consideration of the school's goals and objectives; compliance with applicable state and federal statutes; effective administration and governance; the teaching of a balanced curriculum; implementation of personnel practices which ensure the hiring of qualified instructional leaders with college degrees; student achievement; and indicator-based quality of learning.

In its 80th Session, the Texas Legislature passed legislation regarding regulation of child-care facilities, and inadvertently un-exempted schools in large counties that are accredited via TEPSAC. The bill authors have stated that un-exempting these schools was not their intent.

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Several private and parochial schools offer child care before or after the school day. During its 80th session, the Texas Legislature passed House Bill 1385, "relating to the regulation of and licensing exemptions for certain child-care facilities."

The intent of this bill was to ensure state oversight of child care facilities to protect the safety of the children enrolled in them. The bill also created a separate category for child care providers which cared for twelve or less children. The bill specifically exempted educational facilities that provide child care in counties with a population of less than 25,000 to target smaller child care providers. However, in doing so, many child care providers at private and parochial schools that operate in larger counties were inadvertently un-exempted. This was not the intent of the bill's authors.

ⁱ "FAQs." Texas Private School Accreditation Commission. <<http://www.tepsac.org/faqs.cfm>>.