

49-50-801. Church-related schools.

(a) As used in this section, unless the context otherwise requires, "church-related school" means a school operated by denominational, parochial or other bona fide church organizations that are required to meet the standards of accreditation or membership of the Tennessee Association of Christian Schools, the Association of Christian Schools International, the Tennessee Association of Independent Schools, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, the Tennessee Association of Non-Public Academic Schools, the Tennessee Association of Church Related Schools or a school affiliated with Accelerated Christian Education, Inc.

(b) The state board of education and local boards of education are prohibited from regulating the selection of faculty or textbooks or the establishment of a curriculum in church-related schools.

(c) The state board of education and local boards of education shall not prohibit or impede the transfer of a student from a church-related school to a public school of this state. Local boards may, however, place students transferring from a church-related school to a public school in a grade level based upon the student's performance on a test administered by the board for that purpose. In local school systems where the local board of education requires tests for students transferring to that system from another public school system, the same test shall be administered to students transferring to such system from church-related schools.

(d) Church-related schools shall be conducted for the same length of term as public schools.

(e) Nothing in this section shall be interpreted as prohibiting church-related schools from voluntarily seeking approval by the state board of education nor prohibiting the state board of education from extending such approval when it is voluntarily sought.