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**Category IV School Approval, The Farm School**

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**The Background:**

Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-50-801 defines “church-related schools” as “schools operated by denominational, parochial or other bona fide church organizations which 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.”

Neither the State Board nor local boards of education may regulate “the selection of faculty or textbooks or the establishment of a curriculum in church-related schools.” When students transfer from church-related schools to public schools, however, local boards may place the transferring students based on “tests administered by the [local] board for that purpose.”

Because some schools are operated by “denominational, parochial or other bona fide church organizations” which are not Christian in nature, and which may not have chosen to be accredited by the other non-denominational accrediting agencies in the statute, the statute also allows the Board to approve applications from church-related schools that voluntarily apply to the Board for approval.

State Board Rule 0520-7-2-.05 requires Category IV schools to meet building, fire and safety standards, rules of the Tennessee Department of Health, statutory vaccination requirements and the reporting of names, ages and addresses of all attending pupils to the local education agency.

The Farm School has completed an application (attached) provided by the Board certifying its compliance with the requirements of the Board Rule. The Farm School is operated by The Church of the Farm Religious Community and accredited by the National Coalition of Alternative Community Schools (<http://www.ncacs.org>).

**The Recommendation:**

SBE staff recommends adoption of the application on final reading. The SDE staff concurs with this recommendation.

## **Attachments**

### **Application letter to Dr. Nixon, July 20, 2006**

Completed Category IV Church-related Schools Application, July 20, 2006  
Annual School Inspection Follow-Up by State Fire Marshal, May 2, 2006  
Division of Fire Prevention Electrical Inspection, April 11, 2006  
School Plant Environmental Survey, April 18, 2006  
Boiler Inspection, September 9, 2005

### **Application Letter to Dr. Nixon, August 2, 2006**

Charter of The Foundation, the Farm Religious Community  
The Foundation's Corporate Annual Report, March 23, 2006  
The Foundation Warranty Deed (excerpt), April 4, 1988  
Statement of the Farm Religious Community's Basis Beliefs and Agreements