

Accreditation

Secondary schools in the Allegan Public School District are accredited by the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (NCA), which was established in 1895 to set standards of quality for schools. NCA is the accreditation agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education for the region of nineteen states that includes Michigan. All secondary schools, including the Allegan Alternative High School, are fully accredited, and are engaged in the 5-year process of becoming "Performance Accredited."

Michigan's Department of Education approved a new state accreditation system in March, 2002, known as the *Education YES!* reform package. This system for accreditation is based on student achievement (MEAP scores), as well as other management, curriculum, and performance indicators. In addition to the state accreditation system, the federal government has passed legislation known as *No Child Left Behind*. As part of that legislation, the State of Michigan is responsible for writing guidelines and advising local districts. Under the state accreditation system, schools were given the following "grades" based on Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)* :

Allegan High School - C	Dawson Elementary - A
L.E.White Middle School - B	West Ward Elementary - B
North Ward Elementary - B	Pine Trails Elementary - B

**Adequate Yearly Progress is determined by a formula of gradually rising increments in MEAP scores, along with attendance and graduation rates. The Allegan Alternative High School did not make AYP, based on state standards, and they earned a grade of "D-Alert" due to this. All other schools in the district made AYP.*

"Highly Qualified" Staff

All teachers employed by the Allegan Public School District have earned "highly qualified" status, as defined by the *No Child Left Behind Act*. This means that a series of stringent requirements have been met by the teacher, in addition to qualifying for a teaching certificate in State of Michigan. Some of these requirements include: passing the MTTC subject content examination for various subjects taught, earning an academic major in the content area, earning a Master's Degree in a related area, earning National Board Certification, teaching for at least 3 years and earning 18 semester hours in an approved program directly related to content area or 90 contact hours of professional development, or demonstrating competence as outlined in a local performance assessment portfolio. By the end of 2005-06, all schools in the district reported that 100% of their teaching staffs met "highly qualified" standards. Parents who have questions about the qualifications and credentials of their child's teacher are welcomed to contact their building principal.

School Improvement Plan

At Allegan Public Schools, the School Improvement process is ongoing. Educators in all buildings are continually collecting data, determining our needs, adjusting our curriculum and programs, and evaluating our progress toward established goals and objectives.

Board of Education – District Goal Areas:

- **Student Achievement** – *Every child can and will succeed to his/her maximum potential (through increased parental involvement, improved school climate, student-focused instructional delivery, and continued support of early childhood programs).*
- **Personnel** – *Through prudent hiring practices and substantial professional development opportunities, all school personnel will be highly suited to their assigned positions (by establishing certification standards, providing staff development opportunities and mentoring, and by careful hiring and evaluation processes).*
- **Facilities & Equipment** – *The District will maintain a physical environment which is conducive to learning (by providing adequate resources for preventative maintenance, obsolescence plan for technology and other equipment, and successful completion of the pool and performing arts center project).*
- **Positive Public Relations** – *The District will strive to foster pride and ownership of Allegan Public Schools by all community members (by providing the community with positive information about APS through newsletters, web pages, and press releases; improved building signage; and increased involvement in community organizations and activities).*

National Goals for Education

The *National Goals 2000* were replaced by the federal *No Child Left Behind* legislation, signed into law by President Bush in 2001. *No Child Left Behind*:

- √ Holds schools accountable for enhancing student performance for ALL children at a high academic level.
- √ Calls for closing the achievement gap for low-income, minority students, and students with disabilities.
- √ Ensures that highly qualified teachers are in every classroom.
- √ Provides for annual testing in mathematics and reading in grades 3-8, beginning in 2005.
- √ Requires parent notification about their school's status, as well as policies that define parent participation within the district.

APS District Curricular Goals:

- Improve students' reading and comprehension skills.
- Improve student writing and communication skills.
- Improve student literacy to ensure all students are reading at grade level by grade 3.