

What is the relationship of K-12 Accreditation Commissions with the U.S. Department of Education?

The United States Department of Education has clarified on its web site its relationship with K-12 accreditation agencies. The USDoEd explains its role on web site page http://www.ed.gov/admins/finaid/accred/accreditation_pg3.html at the end of the first paragraph of Accrediting Agencies Recognized by the U.S. Department of Education:

“(Note: The U.S. Department of Education does not have the authority to accredit private or public elementary or secondary schools, and the Department does not recognize accrediting bodies for the accreditation of private or public elementary and secondary schools. However, the U.S. Department of Education does recognize accrediting bodies for the accreditation of institutions of higher (postsecondary) education. If an accrediting body which is recognized by the Department for higher education also accredits elementary and secondary schools, the Department's recognition applies only to the agency's accreditation of postsecondary institutions.)”

All of the K-12 school commissions including the Northwest Association of Accredited Schools are only acknowledged by the U.S. Department of Education (USDoEd) as one of the six regional accreditation agencies for K-12 Education. The K-12 commissions are not “formally” recognized, as recognition by the USDoEd is strictly for post-secondary institutions where students are seeking access to federal funds for financial assistance programs for U.S. citizens.