OKLAHOMA STATE
DEPARTMENT *of* EDUCATION

MEMORANDUM

TO: The State Department of Education

FROM: Stacy Eden

DATE: November 4, 2026

SUBJECT: Lindsey Nicole Henry Scholarship

Cottonwood Discovery School (CDS) request approval to participate in the Lindsey Nicole Henry Scholarship for Students with Disabilities program. They are accredited through Cognia.

Cottonwood Discovery School offers reading and speech services from outside sources. One certified CALT provides Take Flight for dyslexic students and reading interventions for students in need. One certified Speech Pathologist for students with speech and language delays. These services are provided on site during the school day.

Included is compliance documentation that meets certain criteria in the application.

- Criteria 1: Fiscal Soundness – Certified Accountant Statement
- Criteria 2: Non-Discrimination – Family Handbook and Policy
- Criteria 3: Teacher Requirement – Employee Requirement Policy and Certificates
- Criteria 4: Accreditation – Cognia Approval Email

SE

2500 NORTH LINCOLN BOULEVARD, OKLAHOMA CITY, OKLAHOMA 73105-4599
(405)521-3301 PHONE • (405)521-6205 FAX • WWW.OK.GOV/SDE

LINDSEY NICOLE HENRY SCHOLARSHIP
PRIVATE SCHOOL APPLICATION

Cottonwood Discovery School	3yo - 5th Grades
NAME OF PRIVATE SCHOOL	GRADE LEVELS

6000 NW 120th ct	Oklahoma City	OK	73162
ADDRESS	CITY	STATE	ZIP + 4

405-317-2909	Cottonwooddiscoveryschool.org
PHONE NUMBER	WEBSITE ADDRESS

John Duhon

SUPERINTENDENT, HEADMASTER OR PRINCIPAL NAME

John Duhon	Johncottonwoodds@gmail.com
PRIVATE SCHOOL CONTACT FOR LNH	CONTACT EMAIL

The Lindsey Nicole Henry (LNH) Scholarship Act requires participating schools to be physical, brick-and-mortar institutions in Oklahoma and meet certain approval criteria. Schools must provide documentation to show they comply, which will be reviewed by the Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE). This documentation is often found in the school's policies or handbook. Please prepare a PDF for each item listed below to email with your application.

The OSDE will approve a private school for the scholarship program if it meets the following criteria:

1. The private school must demonstrate fiscal soundness by having been in operation for one (1) year or providing the OSDE with a statement by a certified public accountant confirming that the private school is insured and the owner or owners have sufficient capital or credit to operate the school for the upcoming year by serving the number of students anticipated with expected revenues from tuition and other sources that may be reasonably expected. In lieu of a statement, a surety bond or letter of credit for the amount equal to the scholarship funds for any quarter may be filed with the Oklahoma State Department of Education. ***Proof of compliance required. Save in a PDF, and label it Criteria 1.***

2. The private school must comply with the antidiscrimination provision of 42 U.S.C. § 2000d. ***Proof of compliance required. Save in a PDF, and label it Criteria 2.***

3. The private school must employ or contract with teachers who hold baccalaureate or higher degrees, or have at least three (3) years of teaching experience in public instruction in subjects taught. ***Proof of compliance required. A statement or excerpt from the school polices or handbook stating the educational requirement for the teaching staff is acceptable documentation. Save in a PDF, and label it Criteria 3.***

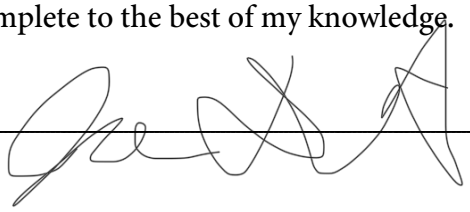
4. The private school must meet the accreditation requirements set by the SDE or another accrediting association approved by the OSDE. ***Please type the name of your accrediting agency in the box below. Save the accreditation approval letter or certificate as a PDF, and label it Criteria 4.***

Cognia

5. The private school must be able to provide services and/or accommodations for students with disabilities. ***Please describe in detail the services, programs and support you offer to students with disabilities in the box below.***

Cottonwood Discovery School offers reading and speech services from outside sources. One certified CALT provides Take Flight for dyslexic students and reading interventions for students in need. One certified Speech Pathologist for students with speech and language delays. These services are provided on site during the school day.

I verify that Cottonwood Discovery School (NAME OF PRIVATE SCHOOL) complies with all the criteria listed above and will provide documentation for each as proof. The information I have provided to the OSDE is correct and complete to the best of my knowledge.

SIGNATURE  11/3/2026 DATE

How to Submit the Private School Application to participate in the LNH Scholarship

1. Save each criterion as an individual PDF, labeling them as "Criteria 1," "Criteria 2," and so on.
2. Email the complete application, along with all required PDF attachments to stacy.eden@sde.ok.gov. You may also contact Stacy at (405) 521-4876.

S&H Business Services LLC

11/02/2026

Re: Cottonwood Discovery School

To Whom It May Concern,

At the request of Cottonwood Discovery School, we are providing this statement regarding the school's financial condition and anticipated ability to maintain operations throughout the upcoming academic year.

Based upon our review of the financial information and representations provided by the school, including its current financial position, anticipated student enrollment, projected tuition revenue, and other expected sources of operating income, we believe the school has sufficient financial resources and anticipated revenue to support its normal operations for the upcoming academic year.

The school maintains insurance coverage appropriate for its operations and organizational activities.

This statement is being provided for the limited purpose of demonstrating the school's financial soundness and operational viability in connection with its participation in Oklahoma's Lindsey Nicole Henry Scholarship Program

Regards,

Scott Hess

Scott Hess
S&H Business Services LLC

6734 NW 39TH EXPRESSWAY, PO BOX 356 BETHANY, OK 73008
T (405) 203-9070 E SCOTT@SHBUSINESSSERVICES.COM

CRITERIA 2

Nondiscrimination — 42 U.S.C. § 2000d

Cottonwood Discovery School | Supporting excerpts from existing school materials

Federal provision

42 U.S.C. § 2000d prohibits discrimination based on race, color, or national origin in programs or activities receiving federal financial assistance. Cottonwood's existing policies expressly prohibit discrimination on all three grounds.

Exhibit A — Public homepage: Nondiscrimination Policy

Source: Cottonwood Discovery School homepage, section titled "NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY," near the bottom of the page. Reviewed November 3, 2026.

> "Cottonwood Discovery School is committed to providing an educational environment that is welcoming, respectful, and free from unlawful discrimination. The school does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender orientation, or any other status protected by applicable law in its admissions practices, educational programs, employment practices, or school operations."
>
> "Cottonwood seeks to treat all students, families, employees, and applicants with dignity, respect, and fairness while carrying out its educational mission."

Homepage address: cottonwooddiscoveryschool.org

Exhibit B — 2026–2027 Family Handbook

Source: "Family_Cottonwood-Family-Handbook-2026-2027," section "NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY," following the mission, belief, and philosophy statements.

> "Cottonwood Discovery School is committed to providing an educational environment that is welcoming, respectful, and free from unlawful discrimination. The school does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender orientation, or any other status protected by applicable law in its admissions practices, educational programs, employment practices, or school operations."

Exhibit C — Board Bylaws

Source: "COTTONWOOD BOARD BYLAWS," section "NONDISCRIMINATION, ACCESSIBILITY, AND WELCOMING COMMUNITY," Section 2: "Nondiscrimination."

> "The School shall not discriminate in its educational programs, admissions practices, employment practices, scholarship opportunities, or organizational activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, ethnicity, sex, gender identity, disability, age, or any other status protected by applicable law."
>
> "The School shall operate in compliance with all applicable federal, state, and local nondiscrimination requirements."

COTTONWOOD DISCOVERY SCHOOL

Criteria 3 | Teacher Qualifications and Certification

Statement of School Practice

Cottonwood Discovery School affirms that all of its classroom teachers are certified teachers. The school employs or contracts instructional personnel with qualifications appropriate to their assigned teaching responsibilities. Cottonwood maintains teacher credential records and verifies qualifications as part of its personnel practices.

Alignment with Cognia

Cognia Essential Requirement 4 expects institutions to employ or contract personnel whose qualifications and credentials align with their assigned roles and to maintain documentation validating those qualifications. Cognia Performance Standard 13 calls for qualified personnel to instruct and assist learners in support of the institution's mission, purpose, and beliefs.

Criteria 3 — Teacher Qualification Policy

Cottonwood Discovery School requires each employed or contracted classroom teacher to hold a baccalaureate degree or higher, **or** have at least three (3) years of teaching experience in public instruction in the subjects taught. The school verifies and retains documentation of compliance for each teacher. Teacher certification is an additional school qualification expectation.

Verification

This statement describes the school's teacher qualification policy and its certification practice. Individual teacher certificates, degrees, transcripts, or experience verification records are maintained separately and can be supplied if requested.

John Duhon | Cofounder and Executive Director

Documentation note: These are transcribed excerpts of existing policies, not images of the original pages. A live webpage screenshot could not be captured in this environment. This packet documents published policy language; it does not independently audit operational compliance.

Cert#0946798

OKLAHOMA STATE DEPARTMENT of EDUCATION

TEACHING CERTIFICATE

The State Board of Education certifies and authorizes

Kelly M. Coffman

to serve in the accredited schools of Oklahoma as indicated below.

Description	Type	Level	Valid From	Valid To
EARLY CHILDHOOD	Standard	PK-3	1/1/2025	6/30/2030
MILD-MODERATE DISABILITIES	Standard	PK-12	1/1/2025	6/30/2030

**********NO ENTRIES BELOW THIS LINE **********

Teacher #: 410677

Print Date: 5/18/2026

Degree: Bachelor's

Certification Background Clearance: 4/27/2018

Linda Fields

State Superintendent of Public Instruction

OKLAHOMA

Oklahoma State Department of Education Teaching Certificate

Cert#0886156

OKLAHOMA STATE DEPARTMENT of EDUCATION

TEACHING CERTIFICATE

The State Board of Education certifies and authorizes

Lauren E Leighton

to serve in the accredited schools of Oklahoma as indicated below.

Description	Level	Valid From	Valid To
EARLY CHILDHOOD	PK-3	2/1/2023	6/30/2028
MILD-MODERATE DISABILITIES	PK-12	4/1/2023	6/30/2028

**********NO ENTRIES BELOW THIS LINE **********

Teacher #: **455269**

Print Date: **4/25/2023**

Degree: **Bachelor's**

Class of Certification: **Standard**

Certification Background Clearance: **10/24/2022**

Ryan Walters
State Superintendent of Public Instruction

Oklahoma State Department of Education Teaching Certificate

Ryan Walters
State Superintendent of Public Instruction

The State Board of Education certifies and authorizes Lauren E Leighton to serve in the accredited schools of Oklahoma as indicated below.

Teacher #:455269 **Degree:Bachelor's Degree** **Class:Standard** Certification Background Clearance:**10/24/2022**

Area Description	Level	Valid	Expire
1003 EARLY CHILDHOOD	PK-3	2/1/2023	6/30/2028

**********NO ENTRIES BELOW THIS LINE**********

Area Description	Level	Valid	Expire
2556 MILD-MODERATE DISABILITIES	PK-12	4/1/2023	6/30/2028

**********NO ENTRIES BELOW THIS LINE**********

0227000

LAUREN E LEIGHTON

2325 GLENMERE DRIVE

EDMOND, OK 73003

Certificate Above for Personal Records

Submit Certificate Below to School District

print date4/25/2023 C

Outlook

[EXTERNAL] Fwd: Cottonwood Discovery School Cognia Acceptance email

From John Duhon <johncottonwoodds@gmail.com>
Date Tue 11/3/2026 8:17 AM
To Stacy Eden <Stacy.Eden@sde.ok.gov>

Rooted in Love,
John Duhon
Director
COTTONWOOD DISCOVERY SCHOOL
"Rooted in Relationships • Connected to Community • Grown Through Experience"
JohnCottonwoodDS@gmail.com
CottonwoodDiscoverySchool.org

Begin forwarded message:

From: John Duhon <johncottonwoodds@gmail.com>
Date: October 30, 2026 at 4:32:26 PM CDT
To: Kelly Coffman <kellycottonwoodds@gmail.com>, laurencottonwoodds@gmail.com, grantcottonwoodds@gmail.com
Subject: Fwd: Cottonwood Discovery School - Congratulations on Your Cognia Accreditation!

Rooted in Love,
John Duhon
Director
COTTONWOOD DISCOVERY SCHOOL
"Rooted in Relationships • Connected to Community • Grown Through Experience"
JohnCottonwoodDS@gmail.com
CottonwoodDiscoverySchool.org

Begin forwarded message:

From: Cognia Accreditation <policyandaccreditation@cognia.org>
Date: October 30, 2026 at 2:23:01 PM CDT
To: johncottonwoodds@gmail.com
Cc: johncottonwoodds@gmail.com, Jeremy Stinson <Jeremy.Stinson@cognia.org>
Subject: Cottonwood Discovery School - Congratulations on Your Cognia Accreditation!

Greetings from Cognia!

We hope this email finds you and your family, your students, parents, and staff in good health. We are delighted to inform you that your institution was awarded accreditation by the Cognia Global Commission on October 30, 2026. Congratulations!

Cognia bestows the recognition and authority of three of the U.S. regional accrediting agencies, the North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement (NCA CASI), the Northwest Accreditation Commission (NWAC) and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement (SACS CASI). The three listed U.S. regional agencies provide your institution with a highly regarded accreditation that is recognized throughout the world.

Within approximately six weeks, you will receive an official letter of accreditation and an accreditation certificate. In the meantime, we welcome you to verify your institution's status by visiting www.cognia.org. Please click on FIND AN ACCREDITED SCHOOL (located at the top of the page in the black bar) and enter the name of your institution as recorded with Cognia. For best results, please enter the name only; do not enter text in the other fields (e.g., city).

To celebrate and promote your Cognia Accreditation, we are providing you with access to the the Cognia Accreditation Assets page; please enter with the passcode: Cognia30009. This page includes a press release you may share with your local media, the Cognia Accreditation Seal and usage guidelines, and access to the Cognia Promo Shop so you may immediately announce, celebrate, and display your pride and commitment to continuous improvement. If you need assistance with login or access, please contact Cognia's Client Care team.

For support with your continuous improvement journey, please contact your Cognia Representative.

Congratulations again! We look forward to partnering with you for many years to come.

Sincerely,

Cognia



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