**Iowa Department of Human Services**
**CHILD CARE CENTER EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATION FOR LICENSE**

**Name of Center:** Summit Schools Inc **Enrollment:** 27 **License ID No. (Reapplications)** 45341

**Street:** 1010 Regent St NE **City:** Cedar Rapids Iowa **Zip** 52402 **County:** Linn

**Mailing Address:** 1010 Regent St NE, Cedar Rapids, IA, 52402

**Director's Name:** April Bickford **Phone Number:** 319-294-2036

**On-Site Supervisor(s):** Erin Valarezo **E-Mail:** april.bickford@summitschools.org
kathleen.reinwart@summitschools.org
erin.valarezo@summitschools.org

**Date(s) of Visit:** 11-12-2024

**Licensing Visit** X **Unannounced Visit** X **Off Year Visit** **Administrative Change**

**LICENSING VISITS**

**New Application** **Re-Application** X **NA**

**Signed Application (470-0722) Received** **Yes** **No** X **NA** **Date Signed:**

**FIRE INSPECTION** **State** X **Local** **NA** **Is Fire Inspection Approved?** X **Yes** **No** **NA**

**Date Inspected:** 03-06-2023

**Comments :**

**LICENSE TYPE:** X **Child Care** **Preschool (ages 3-5 meets three hours or less per day)**

**Financial Type:** Profit X Non-Profit NA

**Accredition:** Accredited NAEYC NSACA Other X NA

**Program Serves:** Infants (0-23 mo.) 2 Years X Preschool-Age X School-Age
Get-Well Evening Care Special Needs

**SCHEDULE:** X Year-round School-Year Summer Only

| **HOURS:** | *Year-round* | *School-Year* | *Summer Only* |
|---|---|---|---|

| LICENSE CAPACITY | Infants | 2 Years | Preschool | School-Age | Capacity |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| General | | | 20 | 30 | 50 |
| Summer | | | | | 0 |

**QRS Rating:** N/A

| RECOMMENDATION FOR LICENSE: | |
|---|---|
| X | **FULL** license from 11-01-2023 to 11-01-2025 |
| | **PROVISIONAL** license from |
| | **DENIAL** of initial application |
| | **SUSPENSION** of license |
| | **REVOCATION** of license |

**Licensing Consultant:** Amy Lyons **Date:** 11-26-2024

**I. IF CURRENT LICENSE IS PROVISIONAL, IDENTIFY THE CORRECTIVE ACTIONS**

Not applicable.

**II. IDENTIFY THE AREAS OBSERVED ON THE VISIT:**

Summit Schools is an accredited, private, independent, non-parochial PreK-Middle School in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Summit Schools was founded in 1998. Specifically, Summit Schools Inc (the school's childcare program) first became licensed in May 2015. Summit Schools Inc is a non-profit childcare program that operates year round Monday through Friday from 7:15 am to 5:30pm. It is important to note, the program is either closed or operates irregular hours on most holidays, during spring/winter break, on in-service days, and during the summer. This license includes before and after school/preschool child care program. The program serves children age 4 through 12-years of age. Current enrollment is 27.

Summit School director (principal) and Summit School Inc director (childcare) is April Bickford. Ms. Bickford became director in fall 2023. Ms. Bickford has a BA degree in elementary education, MA degree in special education and PK-12 Principal/Supervisor of Special Education certification. Ms. Bickford has previous experience working with children and participates in child development related training. On-Site Supervisor Erin Valarezo has been with licensed program since November 2011 and since it first become licensed in May 2015. Ms. Valarezo has a degree in Early Childhood Education, several years of experience working with children, and continues to participate in much child development related training.

On 11/12/2024, program space was observed.

**III. IDENTIFY THE OBSERVED STRENGTHS OF THE CENTER:**

Summit Schools Inc is a well established program helping meet the needs of families and children throughout the community. Summit Schools Inc is currently celebrating their 8th year of providing licensed childcare. The program is located in a residential neighborhood of a predominantly urban community.

Summit Schools and Summit Schools Inc have the following website for families and persons in the community to learn more about their programs: http://www.summitschools.org/.

The mission of Summit Schools and Summit Schools Inc "empowers each student to exceed their academic, social, and emotional goals to ensure a lifetime of success and personal fulfillment." The history of how Summit Schools and Summit Schools Inc came to fruition and evolved to present day (including location changes, ownership changes stemming back to 1985, name changes, survival of the 2008 flood, and so on) is impressive.

Management of this program has remained consistent. This program's management team (e.g. Ms. Bickford, Ms. Valarezo, business and operations director Larisa Bickel, and office manager Kathleen Reinwart) has systems of organization in place to help ensure administrative items are completed as required and maintained in a confidential manner. Management is knowledgeable of licensing guidelines as well as their own program's policies and procedures.

Summit Schools Inc has retained some seasoned staff veas well as hired a few new ones. Many of the childcare staff work in various capacities within Summit Schools and have degrees in education and/or early childhood development. Ms. Valarezo discussed how the program's childcare team provides enrichments that supplement school curriculum.

Summit Schools and Summit Schools Inc ha emergency plans, policies, and procedures in place which are annually reviewed and updated as needed. The program successfully navigated through the 2008 historic Linn County flood, 2019 winter Polar Vortex, 2019 health (covid-19) pandemic, 8/10/20 Derecho Storm, 2021 food supply issues, 2022 infant formula shortages, 2023 air quality alerts and 7/19/24 global technology outage.

Summit Schools Inc operates under a board of trustees. School administration, school board and school custodian help ensure the children's space is sanitary and hazard free each day. Building and grounds are well-maintained. The school kitchen is inspected at least annually by the health department. The outdoor play space includes many natural components including natural seating and building areas. A wheeled-cart allows loose large gross motor materials to be easily taken outdoors. An outdoor shed stores loose outdoor play materials.

Childcare space continues to be arranged in a thoughtful manner with learning and mindfulness at the forefront. Since the last review, many furnishings and materials used by Summit Schools Inc have been updated. Summit Schools Inc incorporates smaller group activities based upon age for homework time and quiet reading activities. Older enrolled children are encouraged to take leadership roles within the program providing positive role modeling for younger students. Childcare curriculum includes social-emotional learning with opportunities for problem solving. Childcare curriculum also includes picnic days, Friday lunch with families, specialized themed summer camp experiences (e.g. gardening, art, music, creative writing, fitness, STEAM) and year-long enrichment opportunities in a variety of disciplines (e.g. mock trial, yearbook club, Lego League, science camp, nature, music, cheer leading, running club, weightlifting).

Summit Schools Inc continues efforts at optimal communication between the program/staff and families. The program has an organized parent-staff/program center, offers regular program newsletters, utilizes technological communication resources, and supports family programming activities. Family programming activities have included fall open house, fundraising opportunities, spirit days, and parent/program conferences.

Summit Schools Inc collaborates well with community agencies including local businesses, various school districts, local higher education entities, and health professionals. Summit Schools and Summit Schools Inc have applied for and received grants including a past ISU grant to support child wellness and fitness.

Each child is engaged in a daily health check upon arrival for early detection of apparent illness, communicable disease, or unusual condition or behavior which may adversely affect the child or the group. The program has policies and procedures in place for hand washing, cleaning, sanitizing and disinfecting.

On the day of the monitoring visit, staff were nurturing and attentive to the children's needs. Afterschool arrival activities with staff warmly greeting each child was observed. Attendance was taken and children were encouraged to engage in reading prior to snack. Staff provided a companionable presence allowing children to have choice in their programming experiences. Routine transitions worked smoothly into the program's welcoming and cooperative environment. Staff provided children with many words of encouragement as well as meaningful discussion. Children responded well to staff and appeared to be truly enjoying their childcare experiences.

**IV. IDENTIFY THE ASPECTS OF OPERATION THAT FALL BELOW THE STANDARDS REVIEWED:**

None noted.

**V. SPECIAL NOTES/RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Ensure staff file (EV) reviewed has physical exam with TB screening/testing placed onto required form 470-5152.

Ensure physical exam for child file (JP) reviewed receives an annual update as required by code.

Licensing observed several battery operated carbon monoxides detectors on-site. However, code requires one UL Standard 2034 (electric with battery back-up) carbon monoxide detectors be in use on each level of the building. Please remedy.

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The program's license remains in full status. Thank you for the visit.

*Note: If you are the Child Care Center Director and you feel something is unclear or unjustly cited, please contact your DHS Licensing Consultant to discuss the issue. The child care director may also send a response which will be placed in the licensing file.

*Note: If you are a member of the general public, there may be additional information contained in the public file. You may contact the DHS Licensing Consultant to inquire.