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

Name of Center: Summit Schools Inc **Enrollment:** 36 **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: Paul Pressler **Phone Number:** 319-294-2036

On-Site Supervisor(s): Erin Valarezo **E-Mail:** info@summitschools.org, paul.pressler@summitschools.org

Date(s) of Visit: 10-28-2022

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: 03-25-2022

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 11-01-2021 to 11-01-2023
	PROVISIONAL license from
	DENIAL of initial application
	SUSPENSION of license
	REVOCATION of license

Licensing Consultant: Amy Lyons **Date:** 11-17-2022

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

Not applicable.

II. IDENTIFY THE AREAS OBSERVED ON THE VISIT:

Summit Schools is the only 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 36.

Summit School director (principal) and Summit School Inc director (childcare) is Paul Pressler. Ms. Pressler became director in fall 2019. Mr. Pressler has a MA degree in educational leadership, has over 10 years of experience working with children, and continues to participate in much 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 10/28/2022, 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 7th 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 and ownership of the program has remained consistent. This includes director Mr. Pressler, primary on-site supervisor Ms. Valarezo, business and operations director Larisa Bickel, and office manager Kathleen Reinwart. The management team is organized, and in turn, the program operates smoothly. The management team has noteworthy systems of organization in place to help ensure administrative items are completed and maintained as required.

The seasoned childcare staff continue to also work in various capacities at Summit Schools. Many of the childcare staff have degrees in education and/or early childhood development. Since the last review several new staff have joined the program. Ms. Valarezo described the team as very helpful and they just "blow you away". Ms. Valarezo discussed how

each is so different with one having experiences being a student teacher and one being fluent in French. Ms. Valarezo reported they all come together and end up creating inspiring activities for the children each day.

Summit Schools and Summit Schools Inc has emergency plans, policies, and procedures in place which are annually reviewed and updated as needed. The program successfully navigated through the 2008 Linn County flood, 8/10/2022 Derecho Storm event, and 2019 pandemic.

Summit Schools Inc operates under a board of trustees. School administration and the board 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.

Childcare space continues to be arranged in a thoughtful manner with learning and mindfulness at the forefront. 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. Ms. Valarezo discussed how the curriculum also includes social-emotional learning with opportunities for problem solving. Childcare curriculum additionally includes picnic days, Friday lunch with families, summer camp experiences (samples e.g. academic week, science week brewing bubbles, technology week with robot work, reading week to discovering their inner author, engineering week, art week incorporating self-expression, math week with cooking) and year-long enrichment opportunities in a variety of disciplines (e.g. Lego League, science camp, learning extensions in the areas of writing, nature, music, physical well-being, cheer leading, 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. Summit Schools and Summit Schools Inc have extended their tutoring services to over 100 additional students, and opened their doors to an additional 200 students for summer programming. Summit Schools and Summit Schools Inc take pride in their educational impact throughout the community.

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. Staff were observed encouraging and engaging in hand washing at all levels. Staff encouraged children to "catch coughs" and "catch sneezes" in elbows. The program has policies and procedures in place for cleaning, disinfecting, and sanitizing.

On the day of the monitoring visit, staff were nurturing and attentive to the children's needs. Morning arrival activities with staff warmly greeting each family and child was observed. One child during drop-off was overheard telling her parent and staff "...I want to come here...I like it..." Children are encouraged to display positive sportsmanship to encourage one another. Children were overheard saying "Nice move" and "Good idea" to one another during a group physical challenge. 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:

There is a plan in place to conduct updated radon testing. Please forward results to licensing upon receipt.

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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.