

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Montpelier, Vermont

TEAM: School Finance / Postsecondary Approvals

ITEM: Will the State Board of Education grant to Educational Praxis Inc., DBA Spark Teacher Education Institute, a Certificate of Approval for four years, commencing November 15, 2011, to offer graduate credit for coursework leading to teacher licensure on the condition that they satisfy the conditions, terms, and limitations contained in the attached report prepared by the Department of Education?

RECOMMENDED ACTION: That the State Board of Education grant to Educational Praxis Inc., DBA Spark Teacher Education Institute, a Certificate of Approval for four years, commencing November 15, 2011, to offer graduate credit for coursework leading to teacher licensure on the condition that they satisfy the conditions, terms, and limitations contained in the attached report prepared by the Department of Education.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY: 16 V.S.A. §176 and 176a.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: The State Board of Education is responsible for issuing Certificates of Approval and Certificates of Degree-Granting Authority, or both, to applicant postsecondary schools whose objectives, programs and resources, including personnel, curriculum, finances and facilities, are found to be adequate and appropriate for the stated purpose and for the protection of students and the public interest.

Educational Praxis, Inc., a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization in Putney, Vermont, offers a thirteenth-month program leading to initial teacher certification as Spark Teacher Education Institute (Spark). Spark is operating in close partnership with the Marlboro Graduate School in Brattleboro, Vermont. Marlboro Graduate School provides classroom and office space, and library/media access. Spark students may enroll for a Master's Degree from Marlboro Graduate School while completing their teacher certification requirements through Spark.

In May 2009 Spark was granted approval from the Vermont Standards Board for Professional Educators (VSBPE) as an alternate route to educator licensure through the Results Oriented Program Approval (ROPA) process. Spark is seeking a renewal of the Certificate of Approval originally granted in September of 2009.

COST IMPLICATIONS: The Department of Education collects application fees to offset the costs of review. There are no additional fiscal impacts to the Department of Education or the state of Vermont beyond the staff time necessary to process the request and formulate this recommendation to the State Board.

STAFF AVAILABLE: Bill Talbott, Chief Financial Officer
Cathy Hilgendorf, Postsecondary Approval Coordinator

Vermont State Board of Education – Department of Education
Conditions, Terms and Limitations of Approval:
Educational Praxis, Inc. (Spark)

November 15, 2011

1. Educational Praxis, Inc. (Spark) shall notify each applicant for enrollment, in writing, on an application, enrollment or registration form to be signed by the applicant, that credits earned through the respective programs are transferable only at the discretion of the receiving school.
2. Educational Praxis, Inc. (Spark) shall promptly provide to the Vermont Department of Education, throughout the life of this approval, notification of any substantive changes in or additions to the sources of income, funding sources, and/or financial management, as well as any new or additional programs of study it may offer.
3. Educational Praxis, Inc. (Spark) shall promptly: (i) notify the Vermont Department of Education of any changes to the facility locations in Vermont and (ii) provide to the Vermont Department of Education documentation that all such facilities meet all applicable state, federal and local fire, safety, health and access standards. The Dept. shall be notified in the event the MOU with Marlboro College is terminated.
4. Educational Praxis, Inc. (Spark) must submit audited financial statements annually, beginning with the fiscal year ending December 31, 2012, to be received within six months after the close of the fiscal year. Reference State Board of Education Rules 2241.3(f) and 2243.5.2.
5. Student records shall be maintained in accordance with State Board Rule 2250. At such time that Educational Praxis, Inc. (Spark) proposes to discontinue programs of instruction in Vermont, the school shall promptly notify the State Board regarding the disposition of student academic records.
6. Failure of Educational Praxis, Inc. (Spark) to meet any of the terms or conditions of this Approval, state laws, or Rules of the State Board of Education, may result in the initiation of regulatory suspension procedures associated with the Certificate of Approval, under Rule 2243.8.