

AGENCY OF EDUCATION
Barre, Vermont

TEAM: School Finance

ITEM: Will the State Board of Education grant an amendment to enable Turning Points School in Morgan, VT to add kindergarten and the disability category of Developmental Delay?

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

That the State Board of Education grants an amendment to enable Turning Points School in Morgan, VT to add kindergarten and the disability category of Developmental Delay. This approval is through June 30, 2016, to coincide with the school's current approval period.

Approval is subject to the condition that the school immediately report to the Agency of Education whenever changes occur in enrollment, programs, policies, facilities, financial capacity, staffing, or administration, during the approval period.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY: Title 16 V.S.A. §166(b)
State Board Rule: 2228 et. seq.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

1. Turning Points School is a day treatment school designed to serve male and female students in grades 1-12, within the disability categories of Specific Learning Disabilities, Emotional Disability, and Other Health Impairment. Turning Points was formed in 1998 as an alternative program to provide psycho-educational services to students in the North Country Supervisory Union, who are challenged by emotional or behavioral problems. The school now serves students from several LEAs. Turning Points School is operated under the auspices of Northeastern Family Institute (NFI) Vermont, Inc., a statewide provider of mental health treatment services to children and families in cooperation with Northeast Kingdom Human Services (NKHS).
2. Turning Points School received initial general and special education independent school approval, to serve students ages 6-18 in grades 1-12, on August 19, 2014 through June 30, 2016. Turning Points School is requesting an amendment to add kindergarten and to add Developmental Delay. A developmental delay for children under six years of age is determined through a comprehensive evaluation as

measured by at least two appropriate measures, one of which must be a diagnostic instrument. Development domains are defined as: (1) Speech and language development including receptive and/or expressive communication, articulation, fluency and/or voice; (2) Adaptive development (self-help skills); (3) Social or emotional development; (4) Physical development including gross or fine motor skills; or (5) Cognitive skills such as perception, memory, processing and reasoning.

3. The lower elementary teacher at the school is an experienced elementary educator, who has a full-time classroom support staff member. Special education at Turning Points School is provided by an experienced, licensed K-12 special educator, who has a Master's degree in special education. This special educator will oversee the implementation of IEPs, 504 plans and provide services. The special educator's assistant has a Master's degree in special education. There is a licensed psychologist on staff, and two therapists working toward licensure under the direct supervision of licensed supervisors at NKHS. At the current time there are 26 students enrolled in the school, six of which are in the lower elementary grades.
4. Turning Points School has developed policies for admissions, discipline and significant change in placement. These policies were reviewed and found to be appropriate.
5. The Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) is part of the school's philosophy and each student's placement is based on individual needs for a LRE.
6. Turning Points School will coordinate with Local Education Agencies through initiating referrals when appropriate, planning and participating in IEP meetings, providing information for evaluations, and planning and developing programs and accommodations.
7. Turning Points School recently moved from Newport to the former E. Taylor Hatton School building in Morgan, VT. The building is handicapped accessible, and a copy of the facilities Certificate of Occupancy (CO) is on file from the Division of Fire Safety.
8. Turning Points School has a policy on prevention and reporting of harassment, hazing, and bullying that is as stringent as the Agency's model policy.

COST IMPLICATIONS: none

STAFF AVAILABLE:

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