

AGENCY OF EDUCATION
Barre, Vermont

TEAM: School Finance

ITEM: Will the State Board of Education grant renewal of general and special education independent school approval to serve students in grades K-8, within the disability categories of Specific Learning Disability and Other Health Impairment, to Maple Street School, Manchester, VT?

SECRETARY'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:

That the State Board of Education grants renewal of general and special education independent school approval to serve students in grades K-8, within the disability categories of Specific Learning Disability and Other Health Impairment, to Maple Street School, Manchester, VT. This approval is for four years through June 30, 2021, to coincide with the school's New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) accreditation period.

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

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

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

1. Maple Street School is an approved independent day school for students in grades K-8. Maple Street School's mission statement follows: "Maple Street School offers excellence in education through a stimulating curriculum placing value on high academic achievement, meaningful engagement in the visual and performing arts, participation in athletics, and the development of individual and social responsibility. We instill in our students the joy of learning so that they may know the satisfaction of attaining knowledge and understanding."
2. Maple Street School is accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC), which is an accrediting agency recognized by the State Board of Education pursuant to SBE Rule #7320. Other than routine annual reports, the next major responsibility regarding accreditation will be the decennial evaluation visit scheduled for 2021.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

The Maple Street School is seeking re-approval in the disability areas of specific learning disability and other health impairment for students in grades K-8. Maple Street School was visited by Agency of Education staff on 2/28/17. Currently there is one Vermont student on an IEP receiving special education services at Maple Street School. The general admission students at the school are grouped by grade, and students who have an Individualized Education Plan will receive services either in a small group and/or individually as per the student's need. The facilities were bright, open, clean and the amount of space is appropriate for the number of potential students. The space has the resources to provide academic, behavioral, and community education as well as the opportunity for kinesthetic movement and exercise. The design, layout and organization of the space is flexible and conducive for teaching a wide range of students and for creating a variety of working environments.

During the visit the Agency employees interviewed staff, toured facilities, observed staff/student interactions, and reviewed student files. A file review was conducted for the Vermont student, who is served under the category of specific learning disability. The staff was engaging, knowledgeable, cooperative and professional. Maple Street School staff reported a positive and collaborative working relationship with Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) to support the student's educational programs.

The following rules were reviewed for compliance:

2228.1 – MET– The Maple Street School demonstrated the policies, procedures and staff training to support students in the disability categories of specific learning disability and other health impairment.

2228.3 – MET – Observed written policies and/or procedures in the areas of: (1) admissions, (2) least restrictive environment, (3) discipline, (4) graduation, (5) faculty qualifications, and (6) faculty-student ratios.

2228.3.1 – MET – Evidence of minimum maintenance of (1) educational records and coordination with LEAs and parents through data and file review, (2) participation in evaluation and IEP procedures through IEP review, and (3) implementation of IEPs through progress reporting and behavioral data.

2228.3.2 – MET – The special education teacher, speech-language pathologist, and occupational therapist were licensed by appropriate state agencies.

2228.4 – MET – Policies, procedures and a written agreement outlines tuition and establishes the division of legal responsibilities with regards to students on IEPs.

Based on the rules for special education approval for independent schools, the Maple Street School has met the minimum requirements for independent school approval.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS: none

STAFF AVAILABLE:

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