

AGENCY OF EDUCATION  
Barre, Vermont

**TEAM:** School Finance

**ITEM:** Will the State Board of Education grant renewal of general education and special education independent school approval, to serve students in grades K-8, within the disability categories of intellectual disability, specific learning disability, visual impairment, hearing loss, speech or language impairment, orthopedic impairment, other health impairment, emotional disturbance, autism spectrum disorder, deaf-blindness, multiple disabilities, traumatic brain injury and developmental delay, to **The Mountain School** at Winhall, in Bondville, VT?

**ACTING SECRETARY'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

**That the State Board of Education grants renewal of general education and special education independent school approval, to serve students in grades K-8, within the disability categories of intellectual disability, specific learning disability, visual impairment, hearing loss, speech or language impairment, orthopedic impairment, other health impairment, emotional disturbance, autism spectrum disorder, deaf-blindness, multiple disabilities, traumatic brain injury and developmental delay, to The Mountain School at Winhall, in Bondville, VT. This approval is for five years through June 30, 2023.**

**That the school reports to the Agency of Education within five days whenever any changes occur in enrollment, programs, policies, facilities, financial capacity, staffing, or administration during the approval period.**

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

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

1. The Mountain School at Winhall (MSW) is a co-educational day school serving students in grades K-8.
2. MSW is approved to serve students within all thirteen disability categories. The special education report follows.

3. The Mountain School at Winhall is accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC). NEASC is a State Board of Education recognized accrediting agency, and listed in Rule 7320 of the State Board's Manual of Rules and Practices. The school will be required to provide regular written reports to NEASC throughout the accreditation period.
4. NEASC, as part of its accreditation review, assessed financial capacity. The applicant has satisfied NEASC's requirements, and the Agency of Education recommends that the State Board support NEASC's findings of adequate financial capacity for the purposes of State Board approval.
5. The Mountain School of Winhall has a policy on the prevention and reporting of harassment, hazing, and bullying which is as stringent as the Agency of Education's model policy.

## **SPECIAL EDUCATION**

The Mountain School at Winhall is seeking re-approval in the areas of; autism spectrum disorder, deaf/blindness, deaf/hearing loss, developmental delay, emotional disturbance, intellectual disability, multiple disabilities, orthopedic impairment, specific learning disability, speech or language impairment, traumatic brain injury, visual impairment, and Other Health Impairment. The Mountain School, located in Bondville, Vermont, was visited by Agency of Education staff on 3/10/17.

Currently there are 12 Vermont students receiving educational services at The Mountain School. 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 social 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 of Education employee interviewed staff, toured facilities, observed staff/student interactions and reviewed student files and IEPs. Observations and file reviews were conducted for four Vermont students. The students were diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder and specific learning disability. The staff was engaging, knowledgeable, cooperative and professional. The Mountain 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 Mountain School demonstrated the policies, procedures and staff training or ability to acquire said training and resources to support students in the

disability categories of; autism spectrum disorder, deaf/blindness, deaf/hearing loss, developmental delay, emotional disturbance, intellectual disability, multiple disabilities, orthopedic impairment, specific learning disability, speech or language impairment, traumatic brain injury, visual impairment, 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 LEA and parents through data and file review, (2) participation in evaluation and IEP procedures through IEP review, (3) implementation of IEPs through progress reporting and behavioral data.

2228.3.2 – MET – Special education teachers, speech-language pathologists, and occupational therapists were licensed by appropriate local state agencies.

2228.4 – MET – Policies, procedures and written agreement outline tuition and establish division of legal responsibilities with regards to students on IEPs.

Based on the rules for Special Education Approval for Independent Schools, The Mountain School has met the minimum requirements for independent school approval.

**COST IMPLICATIONS:** none

**STAFF AVAILABLE:**

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