

AGENCY OF EDUCATION
Barre, Vermont

TEAM: School Finance

ITEM: Will the State Board of Education grant an amendment to enable **The Arlington School** in St. Johnsbury, VT to add the disability category of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)?

SECRETARY'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:

That the State Board of Education grants an amendment to enable The Arlington School in St. Johnsbury, VT to add the disability category of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). This approval is through June 30, 2021, to coincide with the school's current approval period; and

This approval is conditional on the requirement that the school reports to the Agency of Education within five business 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 (b)
State Board Rule: 2228 et seq

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

1. The Arlington School is an independent day school that provides educational, vocational, and community-based services to male and female youth in grades 8-12, within the disability categories of Emotional Disabilities (ED), Intellectual Disability (ID), Specific Learning Disability (SLD), and Other Health Impairment (OHI). Students are encouraged to increase their growing independence with opportunities for responsible decision-making. Curriculum is process-oriented, project-based and experiential in nature. Courses are designed to challenge the individual learning needs of all students. Northeastern Family Institute (NFI), Inc. in conjunction with Northeast Kingdom Human Services, operates the Arlington School.
2. The Arlington School received renewal of general and special education independent school approval, to serve students in grades 8-12 on June 20, 2016 through June 30, 2021. The Arlington School is requesting an amendment to enable the school to serve students in the disability category of Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD).

3. The AOE requested and received specific information about the staff's experience supporting students with communication challenges and sensory needs, and the school's strategy for supporting students building social skills with non-disabled peers. AOE's special education team reviewed this information and they deemed that this school has adequate resources to serve students on the Autism Spectrum.
4. The Arlington 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. The Arlington 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. The Arlington School has a policy on prevention and reporting of harassment, hazing, and bullying that is as stringent as the Agency's model policy.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS: none

STAFF AVAILABLE:

Cassandra Ryan, Fiscal and Regulatory Compliance Coordinator