

AGENCY OF EDUCATION
Barre, Vermont

TEAM: School Finance

ITEM: Will the State Board of Education grant renewal of independent school approval to The School of Sacred Heart St. Francis de Sales, Bennington, VT to serve students in grades K-8, based upon the review by the Agency of Education and notification of continued New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) accreditation?

SECRETARY'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:

That the State Board of Education grants renewal of independent school approval to The School of Sacred Heart St. Francis de Sales, Bennington, VT to serve students in grades K-8, based upon the review by the Agency of Education and notification of continued New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) accreditation. This approval is for five years through June 30, 2024; 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)

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

1. The School of Sacred Heart St. Francis de Sales is a private, Catholic school educating students in grades K-8. As a parish school, the pastor is the canonical administrator and delegates the administrative, educational and operational responsibilities to the administrative team of the school.
2. The School of Sacred Heart St. Francis de Sales is accredited by the New England Association of Schools & Colleges (NEASC), which is an accrediting body 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 2019.
3. NEASC, as part of its accreditation review, assessed financial capacity. The applicant has satisfied NEASC's requirements, and the Agency recommends that the State Board support NEASC's findings of adequate financial capacity for the purposes of State Board approval.

4. The School of Sacred Heart St. Francis de Sales has a policy on prevention and reporting of harassment, hazing, and bullying which is as stringent as the Agency's model policy.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS: none

STAFF AVAILABLE:

Cassandra Ryan, Fiscal and Regulatory Compliance Coordinator