

Gen. Ed. Report on Community Schoolhouse, Brattleboro, VT.

1. The school's educational philosophy is to provide a secure, structured, and predictable environment to children who are experiencing emotional and/or behavioral difficulties, which hinder their success in public school. Some of the children have experienced trauma and disruption in their lives and consequently have developed a negative self-image, as well as fear and anxiety. It is the school's belief that children should feel understood and accepted in a secure and structured environment, so that they develop their self-esteem and sense of self-control in order to reach their personal and academic potential. Community Schoolhouse is able to accommodate up to 34 day students and 9 residential students ages 5-13 in grades K-8. Numbers fluctuate during the course of the year, as students are able to return to their regular public schools.

2. The State Board of Education last granted independent school approval to Community Schoolhouse, Brattleboro on August 21, 2012 through June 30, 2017.

3. Community Schoolhouse, Brattleboro was visited on behalf of the Commissioner by Brian Morgan on January 8, 2018.

4. The school occupies a large corner lot in a residential neighborhood in Brattleboro, VT bound by Oak street and High Street. There are two primary buildings. Both these buildings are two-storey, wood framed structures, heated with oil and provided with town water and sewer services.

24 Oak St. contains the day school. The Victorian structure and the more recent back wing was once owned by the Prouty Center. It is divided into four classrooms. Additionally, there are several small rooms used for small group/individual teaching spaces, and materials storage, as well as a modest library. There are also two SMART (sensory-motor regulation room) rooms, three time-out rooms, a kitchen, two dining rooms, five bathrooms, and two offices.

The residential classroom is located at 135 High St and consists of a large classroom, a kitchen/dining area, two bathrooms, three offices, a SMART room, and two quiet rooms.

Additionally, the recent renovation of the historic carriage house on the property provides multi-purpose space for break out sessions, meetings, therapeutic recreation groups, and all-school gatherings. There is also an adjacent fenced-in playground with recreational equipment.

The facility meets all state and federal health and safety regulations and is handicapped accessible.

5. The minimum course of study, as prescribed in 16 V.S.A. para 906, is provided and adapted effectively to the age and abilities of the students.

6. Community Schoolhouse is staffed by five classroom teachers, four of whom are licensed in special education, three teaching assistants, twelve paraprofessionals, a clinical director, behavioral specialists, and a number of residential staff. The school and the residential program has the support of an Executive Director, consulting psychiatrist, and a consulting psychologist.

7. The school has the resources including financial capacity and qualified staff to meet its objectives.

A review of the audit report submitted with the application for re-approval indicates that the school is financially sound. The Director also provided a more recent 2017 financial audit.

8. The health, safety, attendance, and assessment records are in good order. Fire drill and evacuation drill records are also in good order.

9. The school maintains an operating schedule that includes a total number of instructional hours each year that is not less than that required of a public school serving the same grades.

10. The school has a policy on prevention of harassment of students that is as stringent as the Agency's model policy.

Respectfully submitted,

Brian Morgan