

AGENCY OF EDUCATION

Barre, Vermont

TEAM: School Finance

ITEM: Will the State Board of Education grant renewal of independent kindergarten approval to serve a maximum of 40 students to the **Green Mountain Montessori School, Inc.**, Essex Jct., VT?

ACTING SECRETARY'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:

That the State Board of Education grants renewal of independent kindergarten approval to serve a maximum of 40 students to the Green Mountain Montessori School, Inc., Essex Jct., VT. This approval is for two years, through June 30, 2020.

That the school must report within five days 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: Title 16 V.S.A. §166

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

1. Green Mountain Montessori School, Inc. is a non-profit, Vermont-based corporation founded in December of 2011. The school has a nine-member Board of Directors that govern its financial structure. The school began in 2001 with six children and one teacher. In 2003, the school expanded with the necessary permits to 20 children and two teachers. Subsequent expansions in 2004 and 2006 resulted in the school expanding its enrollment to 40 children, four full-time teachers, two teacher assistants, and afterschool care personnel.
2. The school's mission is to provide a stimulating, caring and healthy environment that guides children to reach their fullest potential—becoming responsible, independent and creative individuals who are aware and proud of whom they are. The school follows the Montessori philosophy in order to provide an environment that fosters the child's natural love of learning.
3. Pat Pallas Gray and Brynne Reed visited Green Mountain Montessori School on June 4, 2018.
4. Green Mountain Montessori School is located in a restored 1820's brick farmhouse in the center of Essex Town. There are multi-aged classrooms on each of the two floors, where numerous learning stations await the children's creativity and energy. A white picket fence

surrounds a generous and inviting play area. Abutting the school is the Essex Town Library, another favorite place for the teachers and students. The first floor of the facility is handicapped accessible. The facilities are adequate to meet the needs of the students and to meet state and federal health and safety regulations. A copy of the Certificate of Occupancy (CO) from the Division of Fire Safety is on file at the Agency.

5. The Department for Children and Families (DCF) licenses the school as an early childhood program. Green Mountain Montessori School also has earned 3 STARS (Step Ahead Recognition System), which is a quality initiative of the State of Vermont Child Development Division, Agency of Human Services. The school is a member of the National Association for the Education for Young Children (NAEYC).
6. The minimum course of study, as prescribed in 16 V.S.A. §906, is provided and adapted to the age and abilities of the students. The school is structured as a mini community with a multi-aged grouping that models the real world. The curriculum is a mixture of practical life exercises, sensorial exploration, language, math, geography, botany, history, music, art and creative play, all geared to the development of the whole child. At the time of the visit, there were 40 students in attendance, one of which was of kindergarten age. The school's enrollment for the 2018-2019 school year is full, and the school is maintaining a wait list.
7. The faculty includes two lead teachers, two assistant teachers, afterschool care staff, substitute teachers, and an office manager. A science teacher also runs the Vermont Institute of Nature Science's (VINS) Program for the students twice a month. An early childhood licensed teacher provides instruction five mornings a week pursuant to ACT 166. The staff is supervised by the Head of School/Montessori Lead Teacher. The lead teachers all have Montessori training to serve children between the ages of 2 and 7. The assisting teachers are either Montessori trained, have a degree, or are working toward a degree in Education. All staff is required to have current CPR and First Aid training. The staff attends the VAEYC Conference annually and is encouraged to take classes or attend workshops through Child Care Resource in Williston, VT. All trainings are paid for by the school. The Head of School oversees the day-to-day operation of the school.
8. Green Mountain Montessori School submitted a profit & loss statement for 2017-2018 and a balance sheet as of April 30, 2018 to confirm its financial capacity.
9. Student health, assessment, and attendance records, as well as fire drill records, were reviewed and found to be in good order.
10. Green Mountain Montessori School has a policy on the prevention and reporting of harassment, hazing and bullying, which is as stringent as the Agency's model policy.

COST IMPLICATIONS: none

STAFF AVAILABLE:

Cassandra Ryan, Financial and Regulation Compliance Coordinator