

From: Daniel Rufo <drufo@msa-cess.org>

Sent: Wednesday, October 30, 2024 10:14 AM

To: Lovett, Tom <Tom.Lovett@vermont.gov>; Kacey Strock <kstrock@msa-cess.org>

Subject: Re: Middle States application

Dear Members of the Vermont Board of Education,

On behalf of the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools (MSA), I am pleased to submit our application for recognition as an accrediting agency for private and independent schools in Vermont. As the second oldest school accreditor in the world, with over 135 years of experience, MSA is committed to partnering with educational institutions to achieve high standards of academic quality, operational integrity, and continuous improvement. MSA's values and rigorous standards align closely with Vermont's goals for excellence in independent education, including strong commitments to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI).

MSA's Adherence to Vermont's Accreditation Standards

To align with Vermont's criteria for accrediting agencies, MSA applies a comprehensive, evidence-based approach that includes academic standards, school safety protocols, data management, and nondiscriminatory practices. Key aspects of MSA's accreditation process include:

- **Academic Standards and Institutional Integrity:** Our standards cover essential elements such as curriculum quality, faculty qualifications, and student assessment, ensuring that independent schools meet Vermont's benchmarks.
- **Health, Safety, and Data Management:** MSA's accreditation process requires schools to maintain thorough and accurate records on student performance, attendance, and safety protocols, meeting state mandates on data management and reporting.

As an active member of the National Council for Private School Accreditation (NCPSA), MSA also remains connected to ongoing best practices and continuous improvement processes in school accreditation, helping us to align with both national standards and Vermont's specific educational expectations.

Peer Professional Review Process (PPR) Tailored to Vermont Schools

MSA's professional peer review system is a central feature of our accreditation approach. We select experienced evaluators who have both expertise in education and a deep understanding of the unique types and missions of the schools they review. This alignment ensures that each evaluation is not only rigorous but also directly relevant to the school's

context and goals. Our reviewers provide actionable feedback that helps schools both meet and exceed Vermont's accreditation requirements.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: MSA's Approach

MSA takes an integrated approach to DEI, recognizing its importance for creating inclusive and supportive school communities. In our DEI evaluation, we focus on:

- **Assessing DEI Practices:** Our standards cover nondiscrimination policies, equitable access, and inclusive curricula, helping schools build a welcoming environment for all students and staff.
- **Supporting DEI Growth:** To support ongoing DEI efforts, MSA provides resources such as workshops, toolkits, and consultation services tailored to each school's needs.
- **Feedback and Improvement:** We offer targeted feedback on DEI practices, identifying areas for growth and helping schools develop actionable plans to strengthen diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Commitment to Compliance and Continuous Excellence

MSA appreciates the Vermont Board's responsibility in recognizing and holding accrediting agencies accountable. MSA is fully committed to meeting any additional conditions deemed necessary by the Board. Additionally, MSA will provide regular reports and participate in any periodic review processes as required to maintain recognized status.

MSA is honored by the opportunity to partner with the Vermont Board of Education in supporting independent schools throughout the state.

For more detailed responses to the individual requirements, including evidences, please visit this [link](#).

Please feel free to reach out to me directly at drufo@msa-cess.org or 484-459-3210 for any further information or clarification needed to support this application.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Rufo', written in a cursive style.

Daniel C Rufo, M.S. Ed.

Senior.Associate.Vice.President



Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools

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