



NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

February 8, 2023

Mr. Stephen B. Harrison
Executive Director
Kurn Hattin Homes for Children
708 Kurn Hattin Road
Westminster, VT 05158

Dear Steve:

The Commission on Independent Schools of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges met on February 6-7, 2023. At that meeting, the Special Progress Report submitted by Kurn Hattin Homes for Children was reviewed. I am pleased to announce that your Report was accepted, and the Commission has voted to grant Kurn Hattin Homes initial accreditation. Congratulations! The Chair of the Commission will report this action to the Board of Trustees of the Association at its meeting on May 5, 2023. NEASC and the over 550 independent schools warmly welcome you into our membership.

Please note, however, that the Commission has requested a Focused Visit to the school a year from now, in January of 2024. The purpose of the visit is to discuss updates to the legal situation and their financial impact on KHH.

The Commission commends the school for its continued, heartfelt commitment to the children of KHH. The school is doing everything possible to provide for their learning and personal development. The Special Progress Report submitted to the Commission outlines the ongoing initiatives to address the Visiting Team's seven major recommendations. The school has taken significant and creative steps to cultivate strong connections between the educational program and the residential program.

All stakeholders are working earnestly together to support the students' social, educational, and emotional needs. You are doing this in various ways and using diverse resources. Attention has also been given to the admissions process and the role of the counseling department in the residential program. The Commission understands that the recent litigation has strained the financial resources of KHH. Still, the Board and senior leadership are carefully monitoring the resources and confidently thinking strategically about the financial future of KHH. The Commission applauds these efforts.

As a member of three different teams visiting KHH over the past five years, it has been a privilege for me to meet with the dedicated members of the adult community and tour both the educational and residential facilities. There is no doubt in my mind that KHH is nurturing the young children in its care with a commitment to the original mission of its founding. I commend the school for the transparency of the adult community and its willingness to accept suggestions for growth and improvement. KHH has embraced accreditation as a process that demonstrates the highest levels of quality assurance and, no less importantly, leverages school improvement.

KHH should celebrate its accomplishments and the areas of commendation by the Commission. These are proud achievements and milestones in the life of the school. At the same time, the school community is now positioned to take full advantage of accreditation by responding to the several recommendations from the Self-Study, the Visiting Team, and the Commission. These standard-specific and Major Recommendations should be incorporated into the school's strategic planning process.

In addition to hosting a NEASC Director for a Focused Visit in January 2024, your next regularly scheduled evaluation visit will be in 2032. You should also expect to file a Two-Year Progress Report, due April 1, 2025, and a Five-Year Progress Report in 2028, at which times the Commission will review your accreditation. The form for filing the Two-Year Progress Report is available on our website at [Reporting Forms for Independent Schools | NEASC - New England Association of Schools and Colleges](#). This report will ask you to provide an update on the accomplishment of the Major Recommendations and Standard-Specific Recommendations, a reflection on enrollment trends and finances, and a Strategic Plan.

Specific narrative responses to the following Major Recommendations will be requested:

1. The Visiting Team recommends continuing to integrate the academic and residential programs to provide consistency, stability, and structure for the children.
2. The Visiting Team recommends that all adults, both school and residential, be trained to meet the mental health needs of the children in their care.
3. The Visiting Team recommends that the counseling department become more involved with training residential life staff, particularly around interpreting data collected about student behaviors, and by attending regular meetings with the residential life administrative team.
4. The Visiting Team recommends that the Admissions Committee consistently make its decisions based on *all* enrollment criteria, carefully reviewing counseling records and relevant documents regarding each applicant's educational and social-emotional needs before acceptance.
5. The Visiting Team recommends defining what diversity and inclusion mean for the school and creating policies that will welcome and support a diverse and inclusive community of students and adults.
6. The Visiting Team recommends carefully monitoring the school's financial resources with transparent processes and documentation that provide for short and long-term needs and planning.
7. The Visiting Team recommends creating a comprehensive strategic plan involving diverse stakeholders to articulate aspirational goals, action steps, financial impacts, and aligned responsibilities.

As your NEASC liaison, please do not hesitate to contact me at bhamilton@neasc.org or 781-425-7737 if I can be of any assistance.

On behalf of the Commission and the Association, I extend my sincere congratulations to you and your school community. A Certificate of Initial Accreditation will be sent by mail.

Sincerely,



Beth Hamilton
Associate Director for Accreditation and School Improvement

cc: Mr. Mark Bodin, President, Board of Trustees
Vermont Agency of Education