

**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?

**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, 2018.

Approval is subject to the condition that the school immediately report 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 that is governed by a Board of Directors. 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.
2. On behalf of the Secretary of Education, Alicia Hanrahan and Brynne Reed visited the school on November 18, 2015.
3. The State Board of Education granted renewal of kindergarten approval to Green Mountain Montessori School on May 21, 2013 through June 30, 2015.
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. The school is licensed by the Child Development Division of the Agency of Human Services through December 10, 2016.

5. 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, four of which were kindergarten age.
6. The faculty includes two lead teachers as well as two assistant teachers. The staff is supervised by the Head of School/Montessori Lead Teacher. The staff is well-qualified by training and experience for their positions.
7. Green Mountain Montessori School submitted information regarding its financial capacity. After review of this information, it was determined that the school has the resources to support the school's operations throughout the approval period.
8. Student health, assessment, and attendance records, as well as fire drill records, were reviewed and found to be in good order.
9. 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.
10. Green Mountain Montessori School has earned 3 STARS (STep Ahead Recognition System). STARS is a quality initiative of the State of Vermont Child Development Division, Department for Children and Families, Agency of Human Services. This designation was awarded in April 2015 and is good through April 2018.

**COST IMPLICATIONS:** none

**STAFF AVAILABLE:** Cassandra Ryan, Financial Analyst