

**AGENCY OF EDUCATION
Montpelier, Vermont**

TEAM: School Finance

ITEM: Will the State Board of Education grant renewal of independent school approval to serve students in the twelfth grade to Vermont Academy of Science and Technology (VAST), Randolph, VT, based upon the review by the Agency of Education and notification of continued New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) accreditation?

SECRETARY'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:

That the State Board of Education grants renewal of independent school approval to serve students in the twelfth grade to Vermont Academy of Science and Technology (VAST), Randolph, VT, based upon the review by the Agency of Education and notification of continued New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) accreditation. This approval is for five years through November 1, 2026.

This approval is conditioned on the requirement that the school reports to the Agency of Education within five business days 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 (b)
State Board Rule: 2223

1. An independent school may operate and provide elementary and secondary education if it is approved by the State Board of Education.
2. The State Board of Education shall approve an independent school if it substantially complies with the Board's rules for independent schools, promulgated as Series 2200 (Independent School Program Approval).
3. The Vermont Academy of Science and Technology (VAST) is seeking renewal of general independent school approval. VAST was last granted renewal of approval on April 18, 2017, through November 11, 2020.
4. Per SBE Rule 2223, approval may be granted without committee evaluation in the case of any school accredited by a state or regional agency recognized by the State Board for accrediting purposes.

BACKGROUND:

5. Vermont Technical College (VTC) established the Vermont Academy of Science and Technology (VAST) for students in the twelfth grade. The students are afforded a program opportunity to spend their senior year of high school at VTC completing both requirements for high school graduation, by agreement with the sending school, and the first year of an associate degree.
6. Vermont Technical College is accredited by the New England Commissioner of Higher Education (NECHE). NECHE is an accrediting body recognized by the State Board of Education pursuant to SBE rule 7320. Other than the usual updates, the next major responsibility will be the Five-Year Report which is due on August 15, 2025.
7. VAST received preliminary approval from the State Board of Education on June 20, 1989 through June of 1990. Subsequent renewals have enabled VAST to hold SBE approval continually since that time.
8. There were 47 students enrolled in VAST for the 2020-2021 school year.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS: none

STAFF AVAILABLE:

Cassandra Ryan, Director of Regulatory Compliance and Risk Management