

**AGENCY OF EDUCATION  
Barre, Vermont**

**TEAM:** School Finance

**ITEM:** Will the State Board of Education grant renewal of general education and special education independent school approval, to serve students in grades 6-12, within the disability categories of Specific Learning Disability (SLD), Autism (ASD) (high functioning), Speech and Language Impairment (SLI), and Other Health Impairment (OHI), to Long Trail School, Dorset, VT?

**SECRETARY'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

**That the State Board of Education grants renewal of general education and special education independent school approval, to serve students in grades 6-12, within the disability categories of Specific Learning Disability (SLD), Autism (ASD) (high functioning), Speech and Language Impairment (SLI), and Other Health Impairment (OHI), to Long Trail School, Dorset, VT for a term through June 30, 2024; and**

**This approval is conditional 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. Title 166 (b)  
State Board Rule 2228 et. seq.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

1. Long Trail School is an independent day school serving students in grades 6-12. Long Trail School's mission is to provide an intellectually enriching, college-preparatory curriculum in a supportive, caring environment to foster in each student a lifelong commitment to excellence. Long Trail is the first Vermont school to support and offer the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Programme. Ninety-six percent of the graduating seniors go on to college.
2. Long Trail School is accredited by the New England Association of Schools & Colleges (NEASC), which is recognized by the Vermont State Board of Education for accrediting

purposes per State Board of Education Rule #7320. Other than annual reports, the next major responsibility regarding accreditation will be a five-year interim evaluation report due in the fall of 2019.

3. NEASC, as part of its accreditation review, assessed financial capacity. The applicant has satisfied NEASC's requirements, and the Agency recommends that the State Board support NEASC's findings of adequate financial capacity for the purposes of State Board approval.
4. Long Trail School has a policy on the prevention and reporting of harassment, hazing, and bullying which is as stringent as the Agency's model policy.
5. Upon receiving Long Trail School's applications, the Secretary appointed a review committee to visit the school and make a recommendation as required by SBE Rule 2222. Because East Valley Academy is accredited by NEASC, no general education review is required. The special education review was conducted by AOE staff and resulted in a five (5) year recommendation per the attached report.

**FISCAL IMPLICATIONS:** none

**STAFF AVAILABLE:**

Cassandra Ryan, Fiscal and Regulatory Compliance Coordinator

# Independent School Special Education Review Report

**REPORT**  
June 27, 2019

**Long Trail School**

**Submitted by**  
**Special Education Review Team**



## **Approval Recommendation**

Five-year special education approval in the disability categories of: autism spectrum disorder (ASD), other health impairment (OHI), specific learning disability (SLD), and speech or language impairment (SLI).

### **Note on Approval:**

The AOE recommends that Long Trail School ensure implementation of the following prior to its next review:

- a) Consistent ongoing documentation system to confirm delivery of all IEP services, case including management services. The documentation system for all services should include;
  - a. Name of student
  - b. Specific service provided
  - c. Service provider
  - d. Date of service
  - e. Up to date student schedules
  - f. Time/length of service
- b) Policies and procedures to ensure all necessary agreements are in place prior to the required dates or the provision to the delivery of services.
- c) Review staff licensure status annually to ensure a licensed special educator is on staff and able to provide the special education services outlined in student Individualized Education Programs (IEPs).

## **Rationale**

On the date of the visit (05/02/19), Long Trail School was missing a complete data and documentation system to confirm future Individualized Education Plan (IEP) service delivery, documentation and description of Language Services, and other potential services provided with the Language Services instructional time, and agreements signed within the appropriate timeframe. Based on post-visit submissions (dated 5/10/19, 5/13/19, 5/16/19, 6/11/19) from Long Trail School, the Agency of Education finds that the submitted documentation alleviates the majority of documentation concerns and therefore issue a five-year approval for Long Trail School. The Agency will review in five years to ensure these recommendations are implemented systemically.

## **School Description**

Long Trail School is seeking approval in the disability categories of: autism spectrum disorder, other health impairment, specific learning disability, and speech or language impairment. According to the submitted application Long Trail School currently educates 180 students with 4 students served on IEPs.

## **Review Description**

Long Trail School, located in Dorset, Vermont, was visited by Agency of Education staff on May 2, 2019. During the visit, Agency employees interviewed staff, toured facilities, reviewed student files, policies, procedures and lesson plans, and observed student/teacher interactions and instruction. Comprehensive file reviews were conducted for four Vermont students.

## **Review Findings**

2228.1 – Long Trail School demonstrated the policies, procedures, and staff training to support students in the disability categories of; autism spectrum disorder, other health impairment, speech and language impairment, and specific learning disability.

2228.3 – Long Trail School demonstrated written policies and/or procedures in the areas of: (1) admissions, (2) least restrictive environment, (3) discipline, (4) graduation, (5) faculty qualifications, and (6) faculty-student ratios.

2228.3.1 – Long Trail School did not demonstrate evidence of minimum maintenance of (1) educational records, and coordination with LEA and parents through data and file review, (2) participation in evaluation and IEP procedures through IEP review, (3) implementation of IEPs through file review and progress reporting.

### **Note on Evidence**

At the time of the review Long Trail School did not provide a system that would allow the confirmation of IEP service delivery. Supplementary materials provided (5/10/19, 5/13/19 and 5/16/19) documentation for the majority of services present on reviewed IEPs confirmed amendments had taken place and service hours were adjusted to not exceed time of instruction.

2228.3.2 – Long Trail School meets expectations regarding licensed staff. Special education staff were licensed by the Agency of Education.

2228.4 - The Long Trail School did not demonstrate policies, procedures, and written agreements outlining tuition and establishment of the division of legal responsibilities with regards to students on IEPs.

### **Note on Evidence**

At the time of the review Long Trail School did not have signed tuition agreements with LEAs. Long Trail provided documentation of signed Non-Instructional Agreements and communication indicating terms were and had been in negotiation since the start of the school year. Documentation submitted 6/11/19 indicates that all agreements have been signed as of 5/30/19.

**Questions:** Contact Chris Kane at [chris.kane@vermont.gov](mailto:chris.kane@vermont.gov)