

**AGENCY OF EDUCATION
Montpelier, Vermont**

TEAM: School Finance

ITEM: Will the State Board of Education grant initial general and special education independent school approval, to serve a maximum of 12 youth ages 12-22, in the disability categories of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Emotional Disturbance (ED), Other Health Impairment (OHI), Specific Learning Disability (SLD), Intellectual Disability (ID), Multiple Disabilities (MD), Speech Language Impairment (SLI) and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), to Connected Circles, Berlin, VT?

SECRETARY'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:

That the State Board of Education grants renewal of general and special education school approval, to serve a maximum of 12 youth ages 12-22, in the disability categories of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Emotional Disturbance (ED), Other Health Impairment (OHI), Specific Learning Disability (SLD), Intellectual Disability (ID), Multiple Disabilities (MD), Speech Language Impairment (SLI) and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), to Connected Circles, Berlin, VT. This approval is for two years, through June 30, 2025.

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. § 166 (b)
State Board Rule: 2228 et seq

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

1. An independent school may operate and provide elementary and secondary education if it is either approved or recognized 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. Connected Circles is seeking initial general and special education independent school approval within the following disability categories: Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Emotional Disturbance (ED), Other Health Impairment (OHI), Specific Learning Disability (SLD), Intellectual Disability (ID), Multiple Disabilities (MD), Speech Language Impairment (SLI) and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI).
4. Upon receiving Connected Circles' applications, the Secretary appointed a review committee to visit the school and make a recommendation as required by SBE Rule 2222. Because Connected Circles is seeking approval to provide both general education and special education services, the recommendation consists of two separate reports.
5. Pursuant to State Board Rule 2227, the State Board may grant initial approval for a period of not more than two years.
6. Four sections of the new independent school rules took effect upon adoption on May 10, 2022. Those rules are Rule 2223 (Procedure), Rule 2224 (Reciprocity), Rule 2226 (Application) and Rule 2227 (Approval). Connected Circles School has provided a signed addendum attesting to meeting these new rules.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS: none

STAFF AVAILABLE:

Josh Souliere, Assistant Director of Education Quality Division
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