

To consider approval of the proposed expansion to grades 6 through 8 of The T.E.C. Schools, a current Kindergarten through grade 5, private, for profit, Montessori inspired school in Worcester.

Mrs. Rupali Sharma submitted to the administration a request to expand the T.E.C. Schools, which was initially approved by the Worcester School Committee on August 18, 2016 (Item gb-279).

According to Massachusetts General Laws (MGL), Chapter 76, Section 1, private schools must obtain approval of the school committee of the city or town in which the school is located. The MGL also sets the standards by which school committees must evaluate private schools. A new approval is required when substantial changes are proposed to a school. This includes major curriculum changes, an expansion or reduction in grade levels, gender or ages served, a change in location or a change in the existing facility.

In addition to the school committee approval, the department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) requires the district conduct an extensive review of a private school that requests such approval, including their curriculum, physical facilities, personnel, and administration.

Mrs. Sharma, Founder and Director of The T.E.C. Schools, came to central office and presented the proposed expansion and related curriculum to the superintendent and deputy superintendent. In order to comply with the standards for approval, Susan O'Neil, Ph.D., conducted an on-site evaluation of the school according to the criteria specified in the suggested checklist for approval of a private school by a local school committee.

The T.E.C. Schools, as currently approved, is a private, for profit, Montessori inspired school for students in grades kindergarten through 5. The mission remains in place, to cultivate children's natural curiosity and educate them to reach their highest potential, to become accomplished, moral, and satisfied individuals. Learning remains anchored by three key principles: Think, Explore, and Create.

During the on-site visit on Monday, June 3, 2019, Dr. O'Neil met with Mrs. Sharma and reviewed the program using the suggested checklist. This included a review of the current physical plant/safety documents (e.g. Public Health Inspection, Fire Inspection, Certificate of Occupancy, Lead Paint), curriculum, materials, staffing and administration, record keeping, student learning time and assessment. Dr. O'Neil toured the facility with Ms. Emily Converse. This included observing the K-2 and 4-6 classes in session, speaking with a teacher, and viewing the proposed classroom space for grades 6 through 8. The new grades will continue to be inspired by the Montessori approach. In addition, the school has applied to the International Baccalaureate (IB) program for grades 7 and 8.

The administration recommends that approval be granted to The T.E.C. Schools for the expansion to grades 6 through 8 as proposed. The administration will schedule subsequent site visits to The T.E.C. Schools when the expansion is in place.

Selected supporting documents are attached for your review.