



LINCOLN PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Lincoln, Massachusetts

RELATIONS WITH NONPUBLIC SCHOOLS

Private Schools

Background: In order to educate students of compulsory school age in Massachusetts, a private school, including a school with a religious affiliation, must obtain the approval of the school committee of the city or town in which the school is located. Massachusetts General Law c 76, § 1, states the following:

...school committees shall approve a private school when satisfied that the instruction in all the studies required by law equals in thoroughness and efficiency, and in the progress made therein, that the public schools in the same town; but shall not withhold such approval on account of religious teaching...

A private school located in a town is required to seek approval from the school committee of that town, whether or not children from the town attend the school. A school committee's approval means that Massachusetts children attending the private school may do so without violation of the compulsory attendance law. School committee approval is neither an evaluation of program quality nor an endorsement of any particular school. The decision to enroll a child in, or to withdraw a child from, a particular private school is one that parents/guardians must make. In addition to Lincoln Public Schools Policy LBC, the "Advisory on Approval of Massachusetts Private Schools Pursuant to Mass. Gen. Laws c. 76 §1" provides additional guidance for both the Lincoln School Committee and the applicant. (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/advisory/100207privateschool.html>)

Policy: In assessing the initial application of a private school for approval, the School Committee will require and confirm that the following information is up to date:

1. Certificate of Occupancy
2. Fire Inspection
3. Safety Inspection (building and outdoor facilities)
4. Elevator inspection, if applicable
5. Compliance with lead paint poisoning prevention (for children under 6)
6. Compliance with other applicable federal and state health and safety standards

In addition, the Committee will require the private school to provide a proposal that includes information about the following:

1. Population to be Served: admissions criteria and school enrollment projections
2. School Staff: Teacher qualifications; student/teacher ratio; plan for faculty/staff evaluation; compliance with criminal offender record information (CORI) law
3. Curriculum: The curriculum offered is "equivalent" to that offered in the local schools in terms of the following instructional areas: mathematics, science and technology, history and social science, English, foreign languages, the arts, and physical education
4. Student Learning Time and Performance Assessment
5. Organizational Structure of the Administration
6. Records: Plans for maintaining and securing student records
7. Student Services: How the school will provide pupil personnel services for all students (i.e. health care procedures, guidance and counseling, discipline policy)
8. Evidence of Financial Solvency



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Following the initial approval of the private school, the School Committee shall establish, in collaboration with the private school, a schedule and structure for periodic review. The School Committee may include conditions that prompt a review such as a significant change in the private school's location, change in accreditation status, grade offerings, enrollment, or population to be served. If included in the review plan, it will be the responsibility of the private school to notify the School Committee of such changes

In accordance with Massachusetts General Law, the private school shall notify the School Committee of its intention to close.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 40:4E; 71:48; 71:71D; 74:4 through 74:7a; 76:1

SOURCE: Lincoln

Adopted at School Committee Meeting of December 1, 2016.
Revised at School Committee Meeting of March 7, 2024.