



Lincoln Public Schools

Stephanie Powers
Administrator for Student Services

To: School Committee
From: Stephanie Powers, Administrator for Student Services
Re: Request for an Extension of Approval for the Birches School
Date: February 27, 2014

We have received a request for an extension of private school approval by the Birches School, which is housed at the First Parish at 14 Bedford Road in Lincoln. Last year, the Birches School secured approval from the Lincoln School Committee to operate a one-year program within the Town of Lincoln.

The Birches School is operating with an increase in enrollment (8 students in 2012-13 to 21 students in 2013-14), 3 teachers, 4 part-time teachers, and a full time administrator. Students are from 7 towns in the area.

	Arlington	Belmont	Concord	Lexington	Lincoln	Medford	Sudbury	Wayland
K	0	1	2	1	1	0	0	0
1 st	1	0	1	2	1	0	0	1
2 nd	0	1	1	1	2	1	1	1
3 rd	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0
Total	1	2	5	4	5	1	1	2

The program has the following components in place:

- **Physical Plant/Safety**

The classroom spaces appear as appropriate for educating students.

- **Curriculum**

The students are being educated using curriculum materials in reading, writing, STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Mathematics), Spanish, music, and yoga and mindfulness. The curriculum selected is individualized to the interests, age and current performance of the students.

- **Educational Materials**

A broad range of books and individual instructional materials are available and in use by all students.

- **School Staff**

Three teachers that have advanced degrees in education provide the instruction. There are also four part-time specialist teachers in the areas of STEM, Spanish, Yoga, Music, and Art.

- **Administration**

The school has a clearly defined organization that facilitates its objectives.

- **Records**

The Birches maintains student records (e.g., attendance, health, discipline, progress reports) in a

safe and secure office. The school is prepared efficiently to transfer transcripts of all students and former students to the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and/or other schools should it cease operation, in accordance with G.L. c. 71, § 34G.

▪ **Student Services**

The Birches School has a collaborative relationship with the Lincoln Public Schools and fully understands the responsibilities in terms of special education referral when appropriate. A Student Conduct and Discipline Policy is clearly defined and made available to students and families.

▪ **Financial Support**

The Birches School continues to maintain evidence of financial solvency and resources to sustain the educational program. The school has documentation of its legal status.

▪ **Student Learning Time**

The Birches School, by following the academic calendar of the Lincoln Public Schools, provides adequate student learning time (length of school year and school day). Teachers monitor the hours of instruction in each subject for each student.

▪ **Student Performance Assessment**

The school periodically evaluates students' skills, competencies, and knowledge and documents their progress through a 7 page standards-based report card.

The Superintendent is recommending that the School Committee approve the Birches School's request to continue operation as a private school in the town of Lincoln for the 2014-2015, 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 school year with an annual visit from a district administrator for continued compliance with the above requirements.