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Independent School Application Review

Entity Seeking Initial Independent School Approval: Interested party contacts the IS Team for information regarding the application process.

Approved Independent School Seeking Renewal:

Six months prior to the end of the current term expiration, the IS Team will send notification about the renewal process to the IS.

IS must submit timely application to the Agency of Education's IS Team prior to its current term expiration. Timely application extends the current approval until the SBE acts on the renewal application(s).

Application Review Process:

For both initial and renewal applications the review process for SBE approval to operate a Vermont Approved Independent School includes four separate tracks depending upon the following:

1. Accredited Independent Schools Applying for General Education approval only
2. Accredited Independent Schools Applying for General Education approval and one or more Special Education categories
3. Independent Schools Applying for General Education approval only which do not have accreditation
4. Independent Schools Applying for General Education approval and one or more Special Education categories which do not have accreditation

Applications are available on the VT Agency of Education Website

Note: A prerequisite to special education independent school approval is general education independent school approval.

1. Accredited Independent Schools Applying for General Education approval only:
 - a. IS submits the NEASC or NNEC application (as appropriate) and confirmation of continued accreditation to the Agency of Education. The application must be signed. Accredited Independent School Applications do not require further evaluation.
 - b. The IS Team (as the secretary's designee) prepares the SBE "green sheet" with a recommendation for approval for a term of five (5) years.
 - c. The IS Team sends a copy of the SBE "green sheet" recommendation to the IS. The IS has thirty (30) days to respond.
 - d. The IS Team will request placement of the recommendation on the next available SBE meeting agenda as a consent agenda item.
 - e. When SBE date is confirmed, the IS Team will notify the IS of the SBE meeting date via email.
 - f. Upon confirmation of the State Board action the following will occur:
 - i. Approval: The IS Team prepares a certificate and sends to the IS
 - ii. Denial: The IS Team works with Legal to determine next steps

2. Accredited Independent Schools Applying for General Education approval and one or more Special

Education categories:

- a. IS submits two applications -the NEASC application including confirmation of continued accreditation and the Special Education application to the Agency of Education. Both applications must be signed.
- b. The IS Team reviews both applications for completeness including licensure status of special educator(s) and related service provider(s).
- c. The IS Team notifies the State Director of Special Education that an IS school is ready for a special education visit.
- d. The State Director of Special Education assigns staff for the review and at the same time requests the IS Team to submit a copy of the special education application to the assigned staff.
- e. The Special Ed staff coordinates directly with the IS to determine the visit date and logistics.
- f. After a date has been established the special education review team notifies the IS Team of the date for tracking purposes prepares and submit a report to the IS Team.
- g. If the Special Education Review Team's report recommends 5 year Special Ed Approval
 - i. The IS Team (as the secretary's designee) prepares the SBE "green sheet" with a recommendation for approval for a term of five (5) years.
 - ii. The IS has thirty (30) days to submit a written response to the report.
 - iii. The IS Team will request placement of the recommendation on the next available SBE meeting agenda as a consent agenda item.
 - iv. When SBE date is confirmed, the IS Team will notify the IS of the SBE meeting date via email.
- h. If the Special Education Review recommends less than 5 year Special Ed Approval:
 - i. The IS Team will send the special education review report to the IS for review. The IS has thirty (30) days to submit a written response to the report.
 - ii. The IS has thirty (30) days to submit a written response to the report.
 - iii. Upon the earlier of either receipt of the IS's response to the report or 31 days the IS Team will send the report plus the IS's response to the Secretary.
 - iv. The Secretary will respond to the IS Team with her/his recommendation to the SBE including term.
 - v. The IS Team will prepare the recommendation (green sheet) as a discussion item for the SBE's action. The discussion item will include the Special Education Review Team's Report and the IS's response.
 - vi. The IS Team will request placement of the recommendation on the next available SBE meeting agenda.
- i. If the Special Education Review recommends denial, the IS Team will work with the Legal Team for next steps.
- j. When SBE date is confirmed, the IS Team will notify the IS of Secretary's recommendation and the SBE meeting date via email.
- k. Upon confirmation of the State Board action the following will occur:

Approval: The IS Team prepares a certificate and sends to the IS

Denial: The IS Team works with Legal to determine next steps

- 3. Independent School Applying for General Education approval only which does not have accreditation:**
- a. IS submits the general education application to the Agency of Education. The application must be signed.
 - b. The IS Team reviews the application for completeness.
 - c. The IS Team notifies an Independent Contractor that an IS school is ready for a general education visit and sends the contractor a copy of the general education application. The Independent Contractor coordinates directly with the IS to determine the visit date and logistics.
 - d. After a date has been established the Independent Contractor notifies the IS Team of the date for tracking purposes.
 - e. After the visit the Independent Contractor prepares and submits a report to the IS Team.
 - f. If the report recommends approval:
 - i. the IS Team sends copy of the report to the IS.
 - ii. the IS has thirty (30) days to submit a written response to the report.
 - g. If the report recommends denial, the IS Team will forward to AOE General Counsel.
 - h. Upon the earlier of either receipt of the IS's response to the report or 31 days the IS Team will send the report plus the IS's response to the Secretary.
 - i. The Secretary will respond to the IS Team with her/his recommendation to the SBE including term.
 - j. The IS Team will prepare the recommendation (green sheet) as a discussion item for the SBE's action. The discussion item will include the green sheet, the Independent Contractor's General Education review report, and the IS's response.
 - k. The IS Team will request placement of the recommendation on the next available SBE meeting agenda.
 - l. When SBE date is confirmed, the IS Team will notify the IS of Secretary's recommendation and the SBE meeting date via email.
 - m. Upon confirmation of the State Board action the following will occur:
 - iii. Approval: The IS Team prepares a certificate and sends to the IS
 - iv. Denial: The IS Team works with Legal to determine next steps

4. Independent Schools Applying for General Education approval and one or more Special Education categories which do not have accreditation:
- a. IS submits two applications -the General Education and Special Education applications to the Agency of Education. Both applications must be signed.
 - b. The IS Team reviews both applications for completeness including licensure status of special educator(s) and related service provider(s).
 - c. The IS Team notifies an Independent Contractor that an IS school is ready for a general education visit and sends the contractor a copy of the general education application.
 - d. The IS Team notifies the State Director of Special Education that an IS school is ready for a special education visit.
 - e. The State Director of Special Education assigns staff for the review and at the same time requests the IS Team to submit a copy of the special education application to the assigned staff.
 - f. The Independent Contractor and the Special Ed staff coordinate directly with the IS to determine their respective visit dates and logistics.
 - g. After dates has been established the Independent Contractor and special education review team notify the IS Team of the dates for tracking purposes.
 - h. After the visits the Independent Contractor and Special Education review team prepare and submit reports to the IS Team.
 - i. If both reports recommend approval:
 - i. the IS Team sends copies of both reports to the IS.
 - ii. the IS has thirty (30) days to submit a written response to the reports.
 - j. If one or both of the reports recommends denial the IS Team will forward to the AOE General Counsel.
 - k. Upon the earlier of either receipt of the IS's response to the report or 31 days the IS Team will send the report plus the IS's response to the Secretary.
 - l. The Secretary will respond to the IS Team with her/his recommendation to the SBE including term.
 - m. The IS Team will prepare the recommendation (green sheet) as a discussion item for the SBE's action. The discussion item will include the IS Team's General Education report, the Special Education Review Team's Report and the IS's response.
 - n. The IS Team will request placement of the recommendation on the next available SBE meeting agenda.
 - o. When SBE date is confirmed, the IS Team will notify the IS of Secretary's recommendation and the SBE meeting date via email.
 - p. Upon confirmation of the State Board action the following will occur:
 - v. Approval: The IS Team prepares a certificate and sends to the IS
 - vi. Denial: The IS Team works with Legal to determine next steps

Amendments: During a current approval, an IS may opt to request an amendment to its current approval. Amendments are required for various reasons including but not limited to: facility changes, enrollment capacity, the addition of one or more disability categories, etc. The IS Team will work with the IS to determine the extent of the amendment and which application(s) must be submitted. The process for amendments will mirror the above four tracks. Amendments requesting initial or additional special education category approval require only the submission of the special education application.