

**AGENCY OF EDUCATION
Montpelier, Vermont**

TEAM: School Finance

ITEM: Will the State Board of Education waive its rule 2222.1, which states a review committee shall visit the school, so that the Independent School Team can have until June 30, 2023 to mitigate the backlog of independent school reviews created by COVID-19?

SECRETARY'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:

That the State Board of Education waives its rule 2222.1, which states a review committee shall visit the school, so that the Independent School Team can have until June 30, 2023 to mitigate the backlog of independent school reviews created by COVID-19?

STATUTORY AUTHORITY: 16 V.S.A. §§ 166 (b), 2958 (e)
State Board Rules 2200, 2360

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

1. The State Board of Education's rules outline the requirements for general education and special education independent school approval to include both initial and renewal of approval requests.
2. The Independent School Team needs to mitigate the backlog of independent school renewals and amendments affected by the inability to conduct onsite visits due to COVID. It is the Independent School Team's estimate that it will take until June 30, 2023 to address the current backlog.
3. The Independent School Team is seeking the authorization to address the backlog by conducting virtual site visits, to include interviewing school staff, confirming the school's assurances through the Head of School, and reviewing documentation. The Independent School Team's plan is to first reach out to each school to determine if there have been any changes since its application was submitted. Then after receiving updated documentation/information, if needed, a site date/time will be established. A telecommunication platform will be utilized to

enable the Team to complete these reviews. Through this means we will have the ability to have a face-to-face conversation and be able to “see” and review documents with the school staff’s assistance. The documentation we expect to review will be the same documents the Team reviews when onsite at an independent school. We hope to replicate these onsite visits as close as possible to the usual method of an onsite. A report of the Team’s findings will be required after each virtual visit.

4. The Independent School Team will be mindful that a maximum of a five-year approval may be granted by the State Board of Education, pursuant to Rule 2227 and 16 V.S.A. § 166(b)(2). Each school recommended for renewal will be kept within the five-year approval requirement.

FINANCIAL IMPACT: none

STAFF AVAILABLE:

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