

## MEMORANDUM

TO: Heads of School, Council of Independent Schools  
FROM: Rebecca Holcombe, Secretary of Education  
COPY: Stephan Morse, Chair, State Board of Education; Julie Hansen, Chair, CIS;  
Mill Moore, VISA  
SUBJECT: Approved Independent School Application Process  
DATE: October 5, 2015

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Over the last year, we have been working to streamline the processes for applying for initial approval or renewal as an independent school, while still meeting our public assurance responsibilities as laid out in statute and regulation.

I am writing to let you know that we have finalized the new application process for independent schools seeking initial approval or renewal from the State Board of Education, as well as for independent schools seeking special education endorsement(s) from the Board. This process will replace the existing AOE application processes. If your school has already applied for approval or renewal, and if your application is in the process of being reviewed, you do not have to reapply, and your application submission will continue to be reviewed under the same rules (which have not changed).

There are three different application forms available online to support this process, as follows:

- A general education (GenEd) initial approval and renewal application for schools that are not NEASC accredited.
- A general education (GenEd) initial approval and renewal application for schools that are NEASC accredited.
- A form for approval or renewal in special education endorsement area(s). If a school is submitting this form as a part of a GenEd application process, the specific special education application should be submitted along with the appropriate GenEd form (the GenEd application or NEASC assurance form). Schools seeking to add one or more SPED endorsement(s) in the middle of a term of approval only need to submit the SPED form, and their application will be treated as an amendment to their existing approval.

These application forms can be found at the Independent Schools page of the AOE website and can be downloaded, printed, completed/signed and returned to the AOE by via first class mail, or by completing and scanning/emailing to the AOE. The application forms contain the specific instructions for completing and submitting the new application forms to the AOE.

While the application process is changing, the rules and statutes that apply to independent schools remain the same—these applications are a new way of representing existing requirements. This idea was central to the collaborative process of developing these applications through multiple conversations with the Council for Independent Schools and other stakeholders.

If you have any questions about the applications or the application process, we encourage you to visit the independent schools page of the AOE website, or to contact Cassandra Ryan at 802-479-8545.