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Instructions for Rate Approval Request for Independent Schools or Tutorial Programs Serving Students with Disabilities

Authority

Under 16 V.S.A. §2973, the Secretary of Education shall set the maximum rates to be paid by the Agency and school districts for tuition and room and board for independent schools and tutorials providing special education. The rates that an approved independent school or an approved tutorial program shall charge shall be no more than the costs that are reasonably related to the level of services provided to its publicly placed students with special education needs. Reasonable relationship shall be determined by utilizing generally accepted accounting principles, such as those set forth in the *Handbook for Financial Accounting of Vermont School Systems*. This handbook can be obtained by contacting the School Finance Team at the Agency of Education at 828-1998.

Process

Annually, the Agency will send a rate application form specific to each independent school that exclusively serves students on IEPs or to those independent schools, which have a self-contained special education classroom/program. Independent schools serving both general and special education students will receive a form specific to their programs. These forms will now require reporting of actual expenses for the previous school year along with the actual amount for the coming school year. This application reflects standard bookkeeping techniques.

List ALL the costs that will be billed for related services and other fees in addition to the tuition for school year 2020-2021 for publicly placed students with IEPs on the front of the Rate Request cover sheet. In your rate request form, include only those costs that will be covered by tuition. Also, include in your budget all monies the school receives from sources other than tuition, which contribute to educational costs.

Each section of the rate form needs to be completed. The totals of each section are transferred to the last tab of the form (Summary Budget & Rate Request) for review and signature. In addition, the Agency will now be requiring additional documentation including: (1) a typical program schedule, (2) duty descriptions of all staff positions, and (3) a copy of the "written agreement" proposed to be used for publicly-placed students. Any incomplete rate requests will be returned.

The Secretary of Education or a designee will review the proposed rates for each rate submission. If the Secretary concludes that the proposed rates are not reasonably related to the level of services provided to publicly placed students with special education needs, the Secretary shall make a determination as to the maximum rate that will be paid to the independent school for those services. The Agency shall also offer the school the opportunity

for explanation regarding why the maximum rate is not adequate. If the explanation is not satisfactory to the Secretary, the matter will be referred to the State Board of Education for consideration and the Council of Independent Schools shall be notified. The State Board of Education's decision will be final.