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TO: Legal Authorities and Education Directors of Nonpublic Schools Approved Under COMAR 13A.09.10 Educational Programs in Nonpublic Schools and Child Care and Treatment Facilities

FROM: Alexandra Cambra, Acting Branch Chief, Division of Educator Effectiveness
Kelly Meadows, Acting Branch Chief, Division of Educator Effectiveness

DATE: August 30, 2016

RE: Upcoming School Year Information



Welcome back to the 2016-2017 school year. The Division of Educator Effectiveness has experienced several staff changes over this past school year. The Nonpublic School Approval Branch (NSAB) is currently functioning with three Specialists and one dedicated Support Staff. We have welcomed a Division Director, Ms. Jessica Bancroft, will soon welcome a cross-divisional Specialist, Tanisha Brown, and we continue to serve as Specialists and Acting Branch Chiefs, available to support the work of the entire division.

Over the past year the NSAB has continued to support our nonpublic schools in the area of compliance. As we embark on yet another school year, MSDE will continue to provide support to our nonpublic community by means of conducting onsite monitoring visits and providing scheduled and ongoing technical support. As a result of the current staffing structure, please note that our monitoring schedule will change slightly as we move forward. The NSAB will:

- Conduct the onsite monitoring visits on a five- to six-year cycle for all Type I and Type II Special and General Education programs. Type III programs will continue to be monitored on an every other year cycle. In addition to regularly scheduled onsite monitoring visits, the NSAB will continue to conduct unannounced onsite monitoring visits between review cycles during the 2016-2017 school year due to the increase in the number of years between review cycles.
- Provide up-to-date certification information at the time of your school's onsite monitoring visit.
- Post all of the current monitoring tools used during onsite monitoring visits on the NSAB website under "Approved Nonpublic Schools."
- Post additional materials of interest that may be pertinent to your educational programs on our website. Materials may include MSDE announcements, resources for the Maryland College and Career Readiness Standards, and regulatory and statutory changes. Please check MSDE's newly designed website regularly for the most up to date information.
- Provide technical assistance and training focused on regulatory compliance. This year's technical assistance will look different than in years past. We have already provided our annual certification training; however, this year the training was referred to as the Nonpublic School Approval Certification Point of Contact Technical Assistance (TA). This new training is intended for the Certification Point of Contact (CPOC) associated with your school program. The purpose of this TA was to provide the CPOCs with the necessary information and resources to efficiently and accurately facilitate the certification of your educators. Based on requests from the nonpublic community, there will be a repeat of this TA later in the school year.

The second TA that will be offered is a one day training that combines all previous NSAB trainings into one full day of technical assistance. We will focus on preparing for an onsite monitoring visit, which includes compliance with criminal history records checks, behavior intervention and training, student records, Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), Performance Education Plans (PEPs), admissions, and related services documentation. The training date and registration form for this TA may be accessed in the "Training Registration" section of our website under the COMAR 13A.09.10 Schools page.

We are grateful for the partnership we have with our nonpublic schools, giving particular thanks to those schools and organizations that have extended an invitation to us and to the community, enabling us to provide trainings for the school year.

- Continue to allow electronic signatures in the same manner outlined in the September 4, 2012 memo. The policy is as follows:

A school must have a policy and procedure pertaining to electronic signatures to use them on their internal documents. In order to qualify, the Chief Officer of the Legal Authority is required to submit a written statement indicating that they permit the staff in their school to use electronic signatures on their internal documents. This statement is to be sent to the NSAB, attention Alexandra Cambra at Alexandra.cambra@maryland.gov. The statement will be maintained in the school's history folder.

- Mail all official communication to the Chief Officer of the Legal Authority. This practice will ensure that the entity that is responsible for the governance and operation of the program is notified of all issues affecting the operation of the program.
- Monitor a school's instructional materials and equipment during the classroom observations. We will look to see that teachers and students have access to appropriate materials. During planning periods or after the school day, we are asking that teachers who were observed make themselves available to answer any questions regarding the availability of instructional materials and equipment.
- Be available to you at the following emails: Alexandra.Cambra@Maryland.gov; Karen.Garnder@Maryland.gov; Kelly.Meadows@Maryland.gov; and Denise.Scott@Maryland.gov.

Please note the following for the upcoming school year:

- **SB 508 Children – Child Care Facilities, Public Schools, and Nonpublic Schools –3 Contractors and Subcontractors:** This bill was passed during the 2015 session. This bill does not require regulatory changes to the nonpublic school approval regulations as it is adding further clarification as to who must be fingerprinted and to the role of the employer. Furthermore, COMAR 13A.09.10.06A.(1) already requires nonpublic schools to be in compliance with Family Law Article, Title 5, Subtitle 5 and Education Article 2-206.1

As such, the Nonpublic School Approval Branch will continue to monitor the application for criminal history background checks the same way with one exception, now schools will be required to include contractors; which I might add, many already do. As is our current practice, we will randomly select 20% of the employees to check if criminal history record checks have been applied for as per the requirements.

This bill may be found at <http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/2015RS/bills/sb/sb0508f.pdf> for your review.

- Kelly Meadows will be taking an extended leave of absence this fall to welcome her new baby. In Kelly's absence, please direct questions to Alexandra Cambra.

Finally, as we begin the 2016-2017 school year, we would be remiss if we did not remind everyone that as administrators of nonpublic schools, you are required to assure that your school operates consistent with the regulations under which it is approved and it is our responsibility to monitor the school's compliance with the applicable regulations.

It is our hope that providing this information will assist you in assuring compliance with the regulations under which your school is approved. We look forward to our ongoing work with each of you on behalf of our students. If you have any questions or need help locating the information online, please contact us, or your Nonpublic School Approval Specialist at (410) 767-0407. Please accept my best wishes on behalf of all of us in the Division of Educator Effectiveness for a successful school year.

- C: Cynthia Amirault, Section Chief, Nonpublic Schools, Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services
Dorie Flynn, Executive Director, MANSEF
Marcella E. Franczkowski, Assistant State Superintendent, Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services
Denise Scott, Nonpublic School Approval Specialist, Nonpublic School Approval Branch
Sylvia Lawson, Chief Performance Officer, Office of the Superintendent
Sarah Spross, Assistant State Superintendent, Division of Educator Effectiveness