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| Responsibility of: | Quality School Systems and Support | DoE File:  | 50:F19:10497 |
| Effective Date: | November 2019 | TRM: EDOC2017/37984 |
| Next Review Date: | November 2021 |
| Target Audience: | All corporate and school staff, school community members |

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following:

* Independent Public Schools Application and Revocation Process Guidelines
* Independent Public School Board Guidelines
* Modify Parent Membership – Independent Public Schools Guidelines and Procedures
* School Representative Bodies Policy
* Independent Public School Guidelines

# Policy

This policy and associated guidelines provide a consistent approach and understanding of the Independent Public School (IPS) model in the Northern Territory (NT) context. They also outline the requirements, criteria and processes to apply to become an IPS and guidance on revoking IPS status.

IPS are selected on the basis that they have been on a sustained improvement continuum and can clearly demonstrate capacity to operate with greater autonomy, particularly in relation to the school having a clear vision with innovative programs; school operational capacity with a culture of continuous improvement; and local support with a high degree of community engagement to maximise student outcomes.

After becoming an IPS, schools are required to maintain high standards, e.g. gains in student learning outcomes, a sound financial position and continued support from their community.

IPS are also required to work in partnership and network with their community, other IPS, NT Government (NTG) schools and the department to individually and collectively contribute towards improved student outcomes in their own schools as well as support positive change across the Territory.

IPS remain part of the public education system and must work within industrial and legislative frameworks while operating under different accountability and governance structures to other government schools. IPS are expected:

* to influence, facilitate and communicate system-wide and whole of government improvement;
* to have the capacity to innovate, trial and share good practice across the NTG school system;
* to be accountable to their school community and the system through best practice governance structures that value community participation.

IPS collaborate with and are supported by the Senior Director. IPS principals operate with a closer link to the Chief Executive, have increased flexibility in recruitment and selection of staff and have greater authority under the department’s Teacher Recruitment Policy, Human Resource Delegations and Financial Delegations.

IPS are governed by a board that, under section 102(c) of the *Education Act* (the Act), is accountable to their local communities for the achievement of educational outcomes for children and young persons in those communities. An IPS board must engage with the school community to develop a shared strategic direction. Boards will focus on strategic improvement, monitoring and accountability with a goal to improve student wellbeing and student outcomes.

In line with the department’s Accountability and Performance Improvement Framework (APIF), IPS are accountable to the Chief Executive and to the School Board. APIF also mandates that the department, the principal and board co-sign an IPS memorandum of understanding (MOU) that sets the agreed relationship, expectations and obligations expected of each party to the MOU.

All NTG schools, including IPS, are required to undertake a school review every four years. The Chief Executive Officer will determine the review panel for the review of an IPS. The school review report will be made publicly available, e.g. on the school’s website.

## IPS Selection

The Chief Executive will determine the IPS selection timeframe and approve a selection panel. NTG candidate schools will undergo a rigorous process to demonstrate ability to operate with increased autonomy. The selection panel will assess candidate schools against set criteria. The selection panel will provide recommendations regarding the suitability of candidate schools for the Chief Executive’s approval – refer to the IPS application and revocation guidelines for further information.

## IPS revocation

The Chief Executive has the power to revoke the decision to designate an NTG school as an IPS. Conversely, an IPS school board may apply to the Chief Executive to revoke IPS status – refer to the IPS application and revocation guidelines for further information.

# Business Need

Section 74 of the Act provides that the Chief Executive may by gazette notice designate a Government school as an IPS. Under the Act, an IPS has greater autonomy to undertake the provision of education to children and young persons. In addition, Section 104 of the Act provides that an IPS board must perform its functions in a way that achieves the best educational outcomes for the students enrolled at the school.

## SCOPE

This policy applies to all NTG schools and departmental corporate staff, specifically in relation to:

* Expressing an interest in becoming an IPS
* Assessing the suitability of candidate schools
* Operating as an IPS
* Corporate business units providing support to IPS
* Revoking IPS status

# Definitions

**Consultation** is a process whereby the views and opinions of identified stakeholders are collected and recorded for consideration in a decision making process. Consultation is conducted in a way that is transparent, culturally sensitive, inclusive, and affords procedural fairness to stakeholders.

**Government Gazette** is the publication that records the business and proceedings of a government and is authorised to publish public or legal notices.

**Independent public school** is a school designated by gazette notice as a school that has greater autonomy to provide education to children and young persons in the community it serves.

**Independent public school board** is the governing body for an independent public school

**Parent** signifies a child’s father, mother or any other person who has parental responsibility for the child, including a person who is regarded as a parent of the child under Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander customary law or tradition.

**School board parent member** must be a parent of a student enrolled at the school for which the school board has been established.

**School representative body** is an incorporated separate entity established under the Act referred to either as an independent public school board or for non-IPS referred to as a school council

# Roles and Responsibilities

**Chief Executive** is responsible for:

* determining the IPS selection process, including timeframe and selection panel appointment
* approving, revoking and gazettal of IPS status
* approving process for reviewing an IPS
* co-signing the IPS MOU on behalf of the department

**Senior Director** is responsible for:

* collaborating with and supporting IPS

**Principal** is responsible for:

* authentically engaging and consulting with the school community before and during the IPS selection process

**IPS Principal** is responsible for:

* networking and working in partnership with IPS and NTG school colleagues, stakeholders, their communities and the system
* maintaining high standards in student learning outcomes, a sound financial position and continued engagement with the school community through:
	+ ensuring the school continues on an improvement agenda (McKinsey)
	+ ensuring the school continues to meet the IPS selection criteria to a high degree
	+ participating in whole of system improvements
	+ facilitating and focusing on continual community engagement
	+ encouraging local decision making through a school board
* co-signing the IPS MOU on behalf of the school

**IPS Board** is responsible for:

* governing the school with best practice governance in place
* the school’s strategic direction and focusing on improvement, monitoring and accountability
* coordinating the Modify Parent Membership Application (if required) in line with the Modify Parent Membership – IPS Guidelines
* coordinating an application for the Chief Executive’s consideration where a preference to revoke IPS status has been determined by the school community

# Related Policy, Legislation and Documents

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| Department of Education | * [APIF](http://ed.ntschools.net/strpolperf/apif/Pages/welcome.aspx)
* Financial Delegations
* Human Resource Delegations
* IPS Application and Revocation Guidelines
* Modify Parent Membership – IPS Guidelines and Procedures
* Modify Parent Membership Application Form
* Principal Performance and Development Review Policy
* School Reviews Policy
* [School Representative Bodies](https://education.nt.gov.au/education/policies/school-representative-bodies)
* Teacher Recruitment Guidelines
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| Northern Territory | * [Education Act](https://legislation.nt.gov.au/en/Legislation/EDUCATION-ACT-2015)
* [Education Regulations](https://legislation.nt.gov.au/Search/~/link.aspx?_id=5054F4F92C7E4EF889E0102073E363F4&amp;_z=z)
* [Interpretation Act](https://legislation.nt.gov.au/Legislation/INTERPRETATION-ACT-1978)
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| Publication | * McKinsey report [“How the world’s most improved school systems keep getting better”](http://www.mckinsey.com/industries/social-sector/our-insights/how-the-worlds-most-improved-school-systems-keep-getting-better) (2010)
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