

STATE PLAN

Peer Review Criteria and Notes Form for the McKinney-Vento EHCY Program

State Name: New Hampshire



U.S. Department of Education
September 2017

Background

Peer reviewers will apply their professional judgment and experiences when responding to the questions in response to the criteria below. Consistent with section 1111(a)(4)(C) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, peer reviewers will conduct an objective review of State plans in their totality and out of respect for State and local judgments, with the goal of supporting State- and local-led innovation and providing objective feedback on the technical, educational, and overall quality of a State plan, including the validity and reliability of each element of the plan. Reviewer responses to the questions inform the written determination of the Secretary regarding the State plan.

Role of the Peer Reviewers

- Each peer reviewer will independently review a consolidated State plan in accordance to the criteria for Title VII, Subtitle B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act's Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program (EHCY). Each reviewer will record their responses to the questions, will note where changes may be necessary for an SEA to fully address statutory and regulatory requirements, and may also present suggestions for improving the plan or to highlight best practices. Each peer will create individual recommendations to guide the remote review. These are submitted to the Department but will not be shared with the State.
- A panel of peer reviewers will meet remotely to discuss each SEA's plan. The panel of peer reviewers will generate one set of peer review notes that reflects their collective review and evaluation of the SEA's State plan, but the panel is not required to reach consensus. The notes should reflect all reviewer perspectives on each item.

After the peer review is completed, each SEA will receive the final peer review notes that include the peer reviewers' responses to the questions and any recommendations to improve the SEA's State plan in the sections that the peers reviewed. The peer review notes serve two purposes: 1) they constitute the official record of the peer review panel's responses to questions regarding how an SEA's State plan addresses the statutory and regulatory requirements; and 2) they provide technical assistance to the SEA on how to improve its plan. The peer review notes also serve as recommendations to the Secretary to determine what, if any, additional information to request from the SEA. Taking into consideration the peer reviewers' recommendations, the Department will provide feedback to each SEA that outlines the areas the SEA must address, if any, prior to the Secretary's approving its State plan. If a plan cannot be approved, the Department will offer the State an opportunity to revise and resubmit its plan and have a hearing, consistent with ESEA section 8451.

Consistent with ESEA section 1111(a)(5), the Department will make publicly available all peer review guidance, training, and final peer panel notes. The names of peer reviewers will be made publicly available at the completion of the review of all State Plans, though the peer reviewers for any individual State will not be made available.

How to Use This Document

The reviewer criteria is intended to 1) support States as they develop their consolidated State plans, and 2) inform peer review teams as they evaluate each State plan. This document outlines required elements in order for an SEA to fully address the applicable statutory and regulatory requirements. If an SEA has provided insufficient information for peer reviewers to determine whether any question is fully addressed, peer

reviewers should indicate that the SEA has not fully addressed that requirement and identify what additional information or clarification may be needed.

Instructions

Each peer reviewer should include individual review notes in the space provided below each State plan requirement. For each State plan requirement, a peer reviewer will provide:

- Peer Analysis: Describe the peer reviewer's justification for why an SEA did or did not meet the requirements;
- Strengths: Summarize strengths of the SEA's response to the State plan requirement;
- Limitations: Summarize the limitations of an SEA's response to the State plan requirement, including issues, lack of clarity, and possible technical assistance suggestions;
- Assessment: Determine if the SEA met the State plan requirement (indicated by Yes/No); and
 - If the peer reviewer indicates 'no' above, the peer must describe the specific information or clarification that a State must provide in order to meet the requirement.

The peer reviewer notes should address all of the required elements of each State plan requirement in this document, but do not need to address each element individually (*i.e.*, the peer notes should holistically look at I.5 the Strategies to Address Other Problems, incorporating each of the five identified items in this element but do not need to individually respond to each item).

SECTION I: EDUCATION FOR HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH PROGRAM, MCKINNEY-VENTO HOMELESS ASSISTANCE ACT, TITLE VII, SUBTITLE B

I.1: Student Identification (722(g)(1)(B) of the McKinney-Vento Act)

- **Does the SEA describe the procedures it will use to identify homeless children and youth in the State and to assess their needs?**

	<i>Peer Response</i>
<i>Peer Analysis</i>	The peer reviewers observed that the SEA described the analysis of homeless student residency data by LEAs, monitoring protocol, and collaboration with other State agencies and tasks forces as means to identify homeless students in the State and the review and analyses of statewide education assessments, graduation rates, Title I application assessments, and collaboration with other agencies and task forces, to assess needs.
<i>Strengths</i>	Peer reviewers identified several strengths in the plan, including collaboration with other agencies to identify needs, and that the SEA analyzed homeless student residency data and compared State Adolescent Health Risk Assessment data to the number of self-identified homeless youth numbers reported by the LEAs to identify discrepancies.
<i>Limitations</i>	The peer reviewers noted that the SEA did not describe the procedures used to identify homeless children and youth, specifically at the LEA level or how LEAs will be trained. Also, it was noted that it was not clear if gathering data was meant to be a procedure for identification.
<i>Did the SEA meet all requirements?</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No (3) Reviewers
<i>If no, describe the specific information or clarification that an SEA must provide to fully meet this requirement</i>	The peer reviewers indicated that the plan would be strengthened if the SEA specifically described the procedures used to identify homeless children and youth, especially at the LEA level. The information should include how the SEA ensures that identification occurs throughout the State and also identify how LEAs will be trained to identify students, include information about posters, brochures, which school staff will be trained, how often, and where.

I.2: Dispute Resolution (722(g)(1)(C) of the McKinney-Vento Act)

- **Does the SEA describe procedures for the prompt resolution of disputes regarding the educational placement of homeless children and youth?**

	<i>Peer Response</i>
<i>Peer Analysis</i>	The peer reviewers observed that the plan stated the LEA process for disputes and the SEA level process. It was also observed that there were procedures of how families can access the dispute process.
<i>Strengths</i>	Peer reviewers saw strengths in the plan where the SEA requires all LEAs to have a local dispute process that meets the McKinney-Vento dispute requirements and monitors the LEAs for compliance and that services must be provided to homeless youth until the resolution of the dispute. The plan requires information be given to parents or unaccompanied youth at the time of a dispute.
<i>Limitations</i>	Peer reviewers noted that the plan would be strengthened if the SEA provided a link to its process in the plan. The timeline described referred to the NH DOE Commissioner’s making a temporary order within 14 days of receipt, but did not refer to the timelines for the LEA, the State Coordinator, or the State Board of Education.
<i>Did the SEA meet all requirements?</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes (3) Reviewers
<i>If no, describe the specific information or clarification that an SEA must provide to fully meet this requirement</i>	

I.3: Support for School Personnel (722(g)(1)(D) of the McKinney-Vento Act)

- **Does the SEA describe programs for school personnel (including the LEA liaisons for homeless children and youth, principals and other school leaders, attendance officers, teachers, enrollment personnel, and specialized instructional support personnel) to heighten the awareness of such school personnel of the specific needs of homeless children and youth, including such children and youth who are runaway and homeless youths?**

<i>Peer Response</i>	
<i>Peer Analysis</i>	The peer reviewers observed that the SEA provided a comprehensive list of training and technical assistance activities for school personnel and local homeless providers that are designed to heighten the awareness of homeless students' specific needs. Opportunities and resources available to heighten awareness include technical assistance and professional development, liaison training, regional meetings, webinars, dissemination of resources, a listserv and online learning opportunities.
<i>Strengths</i>	The peer reviewers saw strengths in the SEA plan where the narrative included in its list of activities many different methods for school personnel to take advantage of the opportunities available. These included online training, technical assistance through emails, webinars and resources, statewide meetings, and training sessions. The SEA targets training to different school personnel, including school nurses and social workers, with training available throughout the year at a number of different conferences.
<i>Limitations</i>	The peer reviewers noted that the plan would be strengthened if the SEA provided additional description of the specific activities such as topics of training and materials, web-based training, and State posters, as well as specific awareness activities for runaway and homeless youth. Information on how the LEA provides professional development to local school personnel and the expectations for liaisons training of school staff would also be beneficial.
<i>Did the SEA meet all requirements?</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes (3) Reviewers
<i>If no, describe the specific information or clarification that an SEA must provide to fully meet this requirement</i>	

I.4: Access to Services (722(g)(1)(F) of the McKinney-Vento Act)

- **Does the SEA describe procedures that ensure that homeless children have access to public preschool programs, administered by the SEA or LEA, as provided to other children?**

	<i>Peer Response</i>
<i>Peer Analysis</i>	The peer reviewers observed that the State plan described how the homeless education program will ensure that homeless children have the same access to early childhood and special education services by monitoring LEAs with public preschool programs. The plan included specific details about working with nurses, and extracurricular activities.
<i>Strengths</i>	The peer reviewers saw strengths in the plan, including information about reducing barriers and that the SEA described opportunities for technical assistance and professional development and collaboration with early childhood and preschool program partners, monitoring of LEAs with public preschool programs and the SEA requiring evidence the LEA is providing this during monitoring. Part of the evidence requires disseminating information broadly in the community.
<i>Limitations</i>	The peer reviewers noted that the SEA’s narrative did not address specifically the SEA or LEA procedures for application, enrollment, prioritization, or transportation of homeless children in State or LEA-administered preschool programs. The plan would be strengthened if links or copies to the procedures were included.
<i>Did the SEA meet all requirements?</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes (2) Reviewers <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No (1) Reviewer
<i>If no, describe the specific information or clarification that an SEA must provide to fully meet this requirement</i>	It was indicated that the plan narrative did not specifically address the SEA or LEA procedures for application, enrollment, prioritization, or transportation of homeless children in State or LEA-administered preschool programs.

- **Does the SEA describe procedures that ensure that homeless youth and youth separated from public schools are identified and accorded equal access to appropriate secondary education and support services, including by identifying and removing barriers that prevent youth described in this clause from receiving appropriate credit for full or partial coursework satisfactorily completed while attending a prior school, in accordance with State, local, and school policies?**

	<i>Peer Response</i>
<i>Peer Analysis</i>	The peer reviewers observed that the SEA described activities that it will provide to ensure homeless youth and youth separated from public schools are identified and accorded equal access to appropriate educational and support services. These activities include collaborating with local liaisons, school officials, State and local agencies and providers serving homeless youth, including the Runaway Homeless Youth Program, to connect these youth with educational and support services. It was also noted that the SEA will collaborate with LEAs to identify strategies and develop protocol to assist in determining partial school credit criteria; a strong plan to pilot a project for partial credit is included. This will allow the State to explore how appropriate credit can be awarded even with challenges posed by differing LEA schedules.
<i>Strengths</i>	The peer reviewers identified strengths in the plan such as the plan to develop pilot projects to establish protocol for partial credit completion and course credit award through other practices, and to facilitate planning between LEAs.
<i>Limitations</i>	The peer reviewers noted that the SEA did not describe the specific procedures it uses to ensure that homeless youth and youth separated from public schools are identified and accorded equal access to appropriate secondary education and support services such as credit accrual or receipt of appropriate credit for full or partial coursework. While the SEA is planning to develop pilot projects to address credit accrual processes, it was not clear to reviewers how the partial credit plan will be disseminated to the LEAs.
<i>Did the SEA meet all requirements?</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes (3) Reviewers
<i>If no, describe the specific information or clarification that an SEA must provide to fully meet this requirement</i>	

- **Does the SEA describe procedures that ensure that homeless children and youth who meet the relevant eligibility criteria do not face barriers to accessing academic and extracurricular activities, including magnet school, summer school, career and technical education, advanced placement, online learning, and charter school programs, if such programs are available at the State and local levels?**

	<i>Peer Response</i>
<i>Peer Analysis</i>	The peer reviewers observed that the SEA briefly described activities it provided, including technical assistance and professional development, and its work with LEAs and charter schools to promote full participation in academic and extracurricular activities. This included SEA collaboration with other State agencies to allow full access.
<i>Strengths</i>	The peer reviewers found that the SEA, through its monitoring process, will examine evidence of LEA compliance and will also collaborate with other agencies and community providers to identify barriers and saw this as strength of the plan.
<i>Limitations</i>	The peer reviewers noted that the SEA did not describe the specific procedures it uses to ensure that homeless children and youth are accorded equal access to appropriate academic and extracurricular activities. It also was not clear to peer reviewers how collaboration with other agencies will get disseminated to LEAs in order to reduce barriers.
<i>Did the SEA meet all requirements?</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes (2) Reviewers <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No (1) Reviewer
<i>If no, describe the specific information or clarification that an SEA must provide to fully meet this requirement</i>	It was indicated that the State plan would be strengthened if the SEA provided specific procedures it uses to ensure that homeless children and youth have access to academic activities and participate in extracurricular activities.

I.5: Strategies to Address Other Problems (722(g)(1)(H) of the McKinney-Vento Act)

- **Does the SEA provide strategies to address other problems with respect to the education of homeless children and youth, including problems resulting from enrollment delays that are caused by—(i) requirements of immunization and other required health records; (ii) residency requirements; (iii) lack of birth certificates, school records, or other documentation; (iv) guardianship issues; or (v) uniform or dress code requirements?**

	<i>Peer Response</i>
<i>Peer Analysis</i>	The peer reviewers observed that the SEA provided a description of strategies it uses to address problems that may result in enrollment delays. Strategies included introduction of remedial measures or policy recommendations for LEAs to address barrier removals as well as the provision of regular professional development opportunities, dissemination of resources, and technical assistance to key educational personnel, local providers, and family and youth experiencing homelessness, and monitoring.
<i>Strengths</i>	Peer reviewers saw strengths in the State plan where it stated that the State Coordinator continually works to ensure McKinney-Vento Act provisions are continually safeguarded and introduces remedial measures or provides policy recommendations to remove barriers or limitations. The also SEA provided a description of the collaboration between the State Coordinator, and the local liaisons and school nurses, to assist homeless students in obtaining necessary immunizations, screenings, or other required health records, and access to health care and other services and supports. Technical assistance is also provided to family and youth.
<i>Limitations</i>	The peer reviewers noted that the plan could be strengthened by providing a description of how it assists homeless children and youth and their families in accessing birth certificates and other school records. The peer reviewers also noted that the plan did not provide specific strategies that are used to ensure enrollment delays do not occur or how the SEA learns of barriers or how they work to reduce the barriers.
<i>Did the SEA meet all requirements?</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No (3) Reviewers
<i>If no, describe the specific information or clarification that an SEA must provide to fully meet this requirement</i>	The peer reviewers indicated that the plan could be strengthened by including information on enrollment delays due to lack of birth certificates, school records, or other documentation.

I.6: Policies to Remove Barriers (722(g)(1)(I) of the McKinney-Vento Act)

- **Does the SEA demonstrate that the SEA and LEAs in the State have developed, and shall review and revise, policies to remove barriers to the identification of homeless children and youth, and the enrollment and retention of homeless children and youth in schools in the State, including barriers to enrollment and retention due to outstanding fees or fines, or absences?**

	<i>Peer Response</i>
<i>Peer Analysis</i>	The peer reviewers observed that the State plan described regional networks as a way to provide professional development and technical assistance and to receive feedback on State policies. However, it was observed that the State plan did not demonstrate that SEA and LEA policies to remove barriers to the identification of homeless children and youth, and the enrollment and retention of those youth in school in the State were developed, reviewed, and revised.
<i>Strengths</i>	The peer reviewers saw strengths in the plan such as the development of regional networks and support for new networks, and communication with the SEA when barriers are identified are strengths that provide a forum for the NH DOE to identify State-level policies or practices that impede identification and enrollment of homeless students.
<i>Limitations</i>	The peer reviewers noted that SEA and LEA homeless education policies were not included in the plan, except for the dispute resolution process. The plan was not found to provide information on how LEAs review and revise policies, or how it addresses outstanding fees or fines, or absences.
<i>Did the SEA meet all requirements?</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No (3) Reviewers
<i>If no, describe the specific information or clarification that an SEA must provide to fully meet this requirement</i>	The peer reviewers indicated that the plan would be strengthened if the SEA included copies or samples of the SEA and LEA policies or links to them in the plan, and clarified how it ensures that policies described are developed, reviewed, and revised at the SEA and LEA levels. If policies do not exist at the SEA or LEA levels, then the SEA should address how such policies will be developed and include how the SEA and LEAs remove barriers that are created from outstanding fees or fines, and absences.

I.7: Assistance from Counselors (722(g)(1)(K))

- **Does the SEA include how youths described in section 725(2) will receive assistance from counselors to advise such youths and prepare and improve the readiness of such youths for college?**

	<i>Peer Response</i>
<i>Peer Analysis</i>	The peer reviewers observed that the SEA described numerous types of assistance provided, including referrals to counselors and liaisons, about how the State Coordinator will provide information on best practices to liaisons and counselors in advising homeless youth and preparing and improving their readiness for college. Expectations are set for the LEA to connect with counselors; however, the SEA did not describe how homeless youth will receive such assistance from counselors.
<i>Strengths</i>	Peer reviewers saw strengths in the plan where local liaisons referred eligible youth to school counselors and track these referrals, and school counselors are invited to attend liaisons' professional development and training opportunities. In addition, the SEA has developed a network of Single Points of Contact (SPOC) with higher education institutions to support and provide services to homeless youth.
<i>Limitations</i>	The peer reviewers noted that the SEA did not describe how homeless youth will receive such assistance from counselors, including preparation of college applications, or application for financial aid (such as the FAFSA), and did not describe a connection between local liaisons and school counselors.
<i>Did the SEA meet all requirements?</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes (1) Reviewer <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No (2) Reviewers
<i>If no, describe the specific information or clarification that an SEA must provide to fully meet this requirement</i>	The peer reviewers indicated that the plan would be strengthened if the SEA described how counselors will assist and advise homeless youth and prepare and improve their readiness for college. The information needs to include specific activities about how school counselors will provide guidance or preparing for youth for college.