

STATE PLAN

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

State Name: New Mexico



U.S. Department of Education
May 31, 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;
- Overall Determination: 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 review panel observed that the section where this requirement was discussed in the State plan outlines the SEA intention to engage in appropriate identification, but that the section lacks a clear description of the processes that will be used. They also observed that the model policy might provide more specific information in this regard, but this is not stated in the narrative. Furthermore, it was observed that there is no discussion of a needs assessment, other than seeking stakeholder input on the model policy.
<i>Strengths</i>	The peer review panel observed that the model policy will be an asset, provided it includes requiring evidence of LEA adoption of a local policy as an accountability step and the SEA provides samples of tools that will assist LEAs in their identification efforts.
<i>Limitations</i>	The peer review panel observed that the plan does not include the process for ensuring LEAs continue to seek out homeless students as the academic year progresses. Meanwhile, they also observed that the procedure is not clear and lacks detail. Finally, they also observed that the plan describes activities that have already been conducted by the State Coordinator and that the plan should reflect activities, trainings, and technical assistance that will be provided to homeless liaisons and other school officials moving forward.
<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>	The peer review panel observed that to meet all requirements, the plan should contain more specific procedures needed to ensure that adequate and appropriate identification procedures are put into place in each LEA.

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 review panel observed that the State plan does not clearly demonstrate that all LEAs and charter schools are being held to the same dispute requirements. The peer review panel observed that it may be necessary to describe in the plan what assurances would be required of subgrantees in order to receive funding. Meanwhile, the peer review panel also observed that the plan does not describe whether the State-level dispute processes will be reviewed and or revised.
<i>Strengths</i>	The peer review panel observed that LEA level disputes will be reviewed by the State Coordinator for accuracy and that sample templates and policies will be made available to support consistency.
<i>Limitations</i>	<p>The peer review panel observed the web link to the alternative dispute form directs to the State’s special education web page. The peer review panel observed that a parent, guardian, or student may not understand that the special education dispute resolution form can be used for homelessness disputes, or those individuals may be led to think that homelessness automatically means a student needs special education services.</p> <p>The peer review panel also observed the local dispute policy is limited to LEAs applying for McKinney-Vento subgrant funds. However, they also observed there is no indication whether non-subgrantee LEAs will be required to comply with that policy.</p>
<i>Did the SEA meet all requirements?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <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 review panel observed that the plan does not clearly demonstrate how notification is provided to parents, guardians, or unaccompanied youth. A timeline for the process for filing and determining a dispute should be specifically described in the plan. Finally, the peer review panel observed that the plan should make clear that all LEAs are expected to implement a local dispute policy that contains all essential elements.

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>	<p>The peer review panel observed that this response is in section #2 of the State plan. They also observed that the description lacks sufficient details on how school personnel will be provided with opportunities to understand and be made aware of the specific needs that homeless children and youth. Specifically, the peer review panel observed that the plan provides a specific mechanism for training and updating local liaisons, but there is no description of how participation will be secured using that mechanism. They observed that the plan only provides a general description of training and support opportunities for other categories of school personnel. They observed that this is minimally adequate and that more information would be helpful in determining if this will be sufficient to meet the needs of students experiencing homelessness.</p> <p>Finally, the peer review panel observed that previous professional development is included in the plan but that including it is irrelevant unless these types of training activities are ones which will be ongoing or provided for specific school personnel.</p>
<i>Strengths</i>	<p>The peer review panel observed that the online professional development program for liaison training will provide a valid and consistent mechanism that is accessible Statewide. They also observed that the resources, such as the webinars, are a good way to share basic awareness information with large audiences, but observed that the plan does not make clear whether such webinars will be a component of the program moving forward.</p>
<i>Limitations</i>	<p>The peer review panel observed that there are no incentives or requirements for participating in Edify online training and noted that the plan does not include support training to local school personnel. Specifically, they observed the plan generally describes State Coordinator efforts to provide awareness training to school personnel, but observed the plan provides little detail regarding the scope of those efforts. There is no discussion of how the State Coordinator might support liaisons to provide the needed awareness training to their school’s personnel.</p>
<i>Did the SEA meet all requirements?</i>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes (1) reviewer <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No (2) reviewers</p>
<i>If no, describe the specific information or clarification that an SEA must provide to fully meet this requirement</i>	<p>The peer review panel observed that to meet all requirements, the plan would need to include the types of activities that the State will conduct (not those that have already been done) to heighten awareness of school personnel and to the homeless liaisons beyond the online tool that is going to be purchased. Furthermore, the peer review panel observed that the plan should include a description of the ongoing technical assistance, including compliance meetings, annual conferences, monitoring, and site visits. Finally, the peer reviewer observed that the plan could be improved by prioritizing areas of focus during trainings based on current needs assessment data.</p>

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>	<p>Members of the peer reviewer panel observed that the SEA shares identification tools, including templates. These will be available on the State website for districts to access when working with identifying students as homeless and determining educational needs, including pre-school age children.</p> <p>There was a difference of opinion among the peer review panelists and one reviewer observed that the SEA’s response to this requirement appears to focus on disseminating legislation. That panelist observed that there are no specific efforts discussed in the plan to identify or engage families with preschool children.</p>
<i>Strengths</i>	The peer review panel observed that the plan describes disseminating legislation regarding this McKinney-Vento requirement and includes collaborative efforts with the Office of Early Learning and Transportation Bureau to review policies and identify barriers.
<i>Limitations</i>	The peer review panel observed that there are no efforts described specific to the issue of identifying and engaging homeless families with pre-school children or to address the large local issues surrounding transportation.
<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 review panel observed that to meet all requirements, the plan would need to be revised so that it addresses the identification of preschool students or describe how the SEA will work with organizations that provide pre-K services. Others on the peer review panel observed that to meet all requirements that the plan would need to be more specific about strategies to educate local parents and school personnel about how this issue is addressed under ESSA. Finally, the plan could be improved by describing how the SEA will assist LEAs (and local partners) with identification procedures.

- **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 review panel observed that there are supportive collaborations at the local and State education department to review polices and implement new requirements. These will be conducted by the State Coordinator for the purpose of identifying areas that may be or become barriers and to update policies. The peer review panel also observed the description of technical assistance, training, professional development, and other strategies the State Coordinator will conduct to educate school officials to the new requirements.
<i>Strengths</i>	The peer review panel observed that the State plan includes: developing model policies and procedures for LEAs to follow, a description of work with drop-out prevention, and collaboration with distance learning. The peer review panel also observed the strength of the described collaboration with the homeless liaisons, school personnel, and others to review policies and procedures for credit accrual.
<i>Limitations</i>	The peer review panel observed that the plan lacks detail on how this part of the plan will be implemented in the future, and that there is no discussion on the changes that will result from the Committee. They also observed that the State should consider the removal of information provided on the Joint Education Task Force and the courts as it appears some of the details are irrelevant to include. Finally, they observed that the description is does not include sufficient specifics for the model policy and for what the State Coordinator will do to address these issues. There is no discussion of changes made as a result of the Joint Education Task Force or subsequent work.
<i>Did the SEA meet all requirements?</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes (3) reviewers <input type="checkbox"/> No
<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 review panel observed that this description in the State plan section is incomplete in its explanation of how the SEA will address this issue; particularly ensuring homeless students do not face barriers to accessing academic

	program components. It was observed that while there appears to be some specific activity around transportation issues, there is only a general discussion of how program access and participation will be ensured.
<i>Strengths</i>	The peer review panel observed that the State-wide advisory committee convening is a strength of the plan. They also observed as strengths the efforts to include the collaborative efforts with the Office of Early Learning, Transportation Bureau, and the New Mexico Activities Association.
<i>Limitations</i>	The peer review panel observed that this section of the State plan can include more detail on how each of the partners will be engaged to support homeless students. They also observed that the plan does not specifically address magnet schools, summer school, or other programs for academic support to students experiencing homelessness. Indeed, the peer review panel observed that the plan’s description focuses more on extracurricular participation than academic program participation.
<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 review panel observed that to meet all requirements, this section would need to include a description of the academic supports that the SEA will use to ensure homeless youth possess access to them. Members of the peer review panel observed that there is no mention of what the SEA expects of LEAs. The peer review panel also observed that the plan should address homeless youth participating in the listed academic programs – magnet school, summer school, career and technical education, advanced placement, online learning, and charter school.

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 review panel observed that this section mentions most of the issues listed in the requirement criteria, but it does not provide much detail about how LEAs will be assisted by the SEA in addressing them, other than noting local liaisons will receive information and training on the issues.
<i>Strengths</i>	The peer review panel observed that the State Coordinator will establish an advisory committee that will specifically review policies and procedures that impact students experiencing homelessness. However, they also observed that based on the plan, there appears to be a lack of activities at this time regarding these five requirements.
<i>Limitations</i>	The peer review panel observed that the narrative contains several statements about things that the State

	Coordinator will “ensure,” but does not discuss how the SEA will ensure them. They also observed that the narrative needs much more specific information about <i>how</i> the listed areas will be addressed through policies, procedures, and increased knowledge by targeted audiences, and that the State plan should describe what the State Coordinator will do to “ensure” that the guidelines are being followed.
<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>	The peer review panel observed that to meet all of the requirements, this section would need to address the specific issues of immunization issues, health records, and residency requirements.

The SEA’s plan addresses the following problems encountered by homeless children and youths that disrupt their education resulting from enrollment delays:

- Yes (1) reviewer immunization and other health record requirements
- No (3) reviewers residency requirements
- No (3) reviewers lack of birth certificates, school records, or other documentation
- No (3) reviewers guardianship issues
- No (3) reviewers uniform or dress code requirements

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 review panel observed that the plan addresses how policies and procedures at the local and State level will be reviewed. They also observed that this discussion appears in several sections of the plan, rather than in once specific section. They also observed that that development of the model policies demonstrates attention to issues of identification and enrollment. However, one reviewer observed that the barrier to retention is not addressed, nor are

	fees or absences (except in a cursory manner).
<i>Strengths</i>	The peer review panel observed that the model policies will provide consistency across LEAs. They also observed that implementing a process for stakeholder input to inform the model policies is a definite strength, as is the requirement for annual assurances that local policies have been adopted. The panel observed that the Statewide Advisory Committee should also be an asset, provided it has appropriate composition and meets often enough to engage in meaningful work.
<i>Limitations</i>	The peer review panel observed that restating the statutory requirements regarding immediate enrollment does not constitute a plan, but only an expectation that LEAs will follow through.
<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 review panel observed that to meet all requirements, the plan would need to describe how the SEA will ensure that LEAs will implement the law and how the SEA will they help support such requirements. The peer review panel also observed that an issue in this section is that the required information is scattered throughout several sections of the plan and that it would be helpful to have description in one place. Moreover, it was observed that the issues that were not addressed – student retention, outstanding fees, absences – must be incorporated into the plan for it to meet requirements. The panel observed the plan needs more specific information; in this case, about the activities that will lead to the development and/or review and revision of the pertinent policies.

The SEA’s plan includes the following policies to demonstrate that the SEA and LEAs in the State have developed, and shall review and revise, policies to remove barriers to the identification, enrollment and retention of homeless children and youth:

- Yes (3) reviewers identification of homeless children and youth
- Yes (2) reviewers enrollment of homeless children and youth
- No (2) reviewers retention of homeless children and youth
- No (2) reviewers outstanding fees or fines
- No (2) reviewers 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 review panel observed that this section lays out an appropriate vision for how this issue will be approached, both from a policy level and for professional development and support for key stakeholders. However, it was also observed that this section lacks detail about what exactly will be done. In particular, since the College

	and Career Academy model appears to be a centerpiece of the strategy, the plan needs to have more definitive commitment for how this will occur.
<i>Strengths</i>	The peer review panel observed that the State Coordinator will evaluate the needs of students experiencing homelessness in New Mexico’s educational system, including the National Center for Homeless Education’s (NCHE) State Educational Agency (SEA) level Needs Assessment Worksheet to conduct SEA level evaluations regarding Homeless Education. They noted that the review and feedback from the needs assessment will further drive the training needs for counselors working with youths who are homeless. Finally, they observed that partnering with the New Mexico School Counselors Association to provide professional development and communications regularly is a strength, and that doing so promotes training and technical assistance specific to the needs of youths who are homeless.
<i>Limitations</i>	The peer review panel observed that this section of the plan does not definitively state that the Academies will take place for homeless youth. Rather, there is only a discussion of the potential of the Academies to be a resource. They observed that the plan’s narrative should make clear that the Academies program will be available for homeless youth, and on what scale. Finally, they observed that the plan could be improved by adding some additional detail about the proposed “train the trainer” approach for counselors.
<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>	The peer review panel observed that the plan could be improved by describing the role of school counselors, social workers, and individuals already in schools to help support homeless students.