

STATE PLAN

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

State Name: South Dakota



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>	Peer reviewers observed that the SEA provided a clear, basic description of steps to identify students experiencing homelessness and how to assess their needs.
<i>Strengths</i>	Reviewers saw strengths in the plan’s description of State-level procedures, including SEA training on identification and needs assessment as initial steps. Additionally, it was noted that the SEA provides technical assistance in how to meet identified needs and the SEA encourages liaisons to train local staff to recognize signs and follow district procedures.
<i>Limitations</i>	Peer reviewers noted that the plan did not provide details on monitoring protocols for this indicator or discuss how data are analyzed to determine statewide needs and trends.
<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.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>	Peer reviewers observed that the State’s plan offered a general description of the dispute resolution process and a plan to enhance procedures over the upcoming year.
<i>Strengths</i>	Reviewers noted that the dispute resolution process appears to be well-established at the SEA level and the plan includes further training and technical assistance to ensure that LEAs develop their own local dispute resolution process, with guidance from the SEA.
<i>Limitations</i>	Reviewers indicated that the State’s plan did not include timelines and that there was limited detail to describe procedures or monitoring processes in place.
<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>	Peer reviewers observed that the State’s plan included a variety of resources for school personnel in key roles and that technical assistance offered appears to be comprehensive and well-implemented.
<i>Strengths</i>	Reviewers noted that the plan included a comprehensive list of activities to build awareness, as well as specific examples of communication and training.
<i>Limitations</i>	Reviewers noted that the listed activities did not address the specific audiences listed in the requirement to ensure they are reached and there was no description of how the SEA tracks professional development for compliance. It was also noted that a description of SEA activities to support liaisons in providing professional development to different audiences would strengthen the response.
<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>	Reviewers observed that the State’s plan included strategies for ensuring that children experiencing homelessness have access to public preschool programs.
<i>Strengths</i>	Reviewers saw strengths in the plan’s description of collaborative relationships between McKinney-Vento, Head Start, and Title I programs supported by interagency agreements and regular monitoring of LEAs.
<i>Limitations</i>	Reviewers noted that there is no mention of early intervention, school of origin or transportation for preschoolers. Additionally, reviewers indicated that data and tracking of the percentage of preschoolers experiencing homelessness receiving services would strengthen this section, and that it is unclear if all LEAs are monitored for preschool access as part of McKinney-Vento monitoring.
<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 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>	Peer reviewers observed that the State’s plan included SEA procedures and systems for tracking all students, but that the plan did not describe procedures to ensure that youth experiencing homelessness and youth separated from school benefit specifically. It was also noted that the plan discussed strategies to address credit accrual, including credit recovery courses and free virtual learning courses.
<i>Strengths</i>	Reviewers saw strengths in the plan’s discussion of SEA activities and noted that practices in place for all students are likely to assist students experiencing homelessness, such as common course numbering and allowing for partial credit based on time in class.
<i>Limitations</i>	Reviewers noted a need for procedures specific to McKinney-Vento students, including youth separated from school, and observed that the plan is not clear regarding how the SEA monitors student needs or how barriers are addressed as they emerge.
<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’s plan could be strengthened with a description of procedures specific to students experiencing homelessness, including youth separated from school.

- **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>	Reviewers observed that the State’s plan addressed specific barriers such as cost, but it lacked detail and procedures for activities and programs other than Career and Technical Education (CTE). It was also noted that the SEA will review and investigate State and local policies to expedite full participation in extracurricular activities.
<i>Strengths</i>	Reviewers noted that the State’s plan mentioned using Perkins funds to support CTE access and the State’s intention to work with the State’s High School Activities Association to adjust policies affecting full participation of students experiencing homelessness in athletics and fine arts programs.
<i>Limitations</i>	Reviewers observed that there was no reference to academic programs beyond CTE. Magnet schools, summer school, advanced placement, online learning, and charter school programs were not addressed.
<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>	Reviewers noted that the State’s plan could be strengthened with further description of procedures to eliminate barriers to academic and extracurricular activities (addressing each of the programs listed in this requirement).

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>	Reviewers observed that the State’s plan provided specific examples of how the SEA works with LEAs to address enrollment issues.
<i>Strengths</i>	The reviewers indicated that the plan provided specific examples of how the SEA or LEAs remove barriers to enrollment, such as using residency questionnaires, providing departing students with enrollment information to ease transitions, and using caregiver affidavits. Reviewers also noted that the SEA can analyze State data to track the date of identification and enrollment, and that the SEA monitors LEAs to ensure compliance with this requirement.
<i>Limitations</i>	Reviewers suggested that additional discussion of typical barriers faced at the local level, and how the SEA responds to assist in the removal of those barriers would strengthen the plan.
<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.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>	Reviewers observed that the State’s plan included the provision of training and technical assistance, and described several specific strategies relative to this indicator. However, it was also noted the description was unclear regarding formal procedures for review and revision of policies at the State level.
<i>Strengths</i>	Reviewers saw strengths in the plan’s description of training and technical assistance from the SEA, and in the reference to supports for review of district policies.
<i>Limitations</i>	Reviewers noted that the plan did not describe how the SEA holds LEAs accountable for the development and implementation of local policy that is aligned with State policy. A process for review and revision of local policy is expected, but it was not clear how it is ensured. Additionally, information related to identification, enrollment and outstanding fees or fines was unclear.
<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’s plan could be strengthened by including specific information on how policies that create barriers are reviewed and revised.

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>	Peer reviewers observed that the State’s plan included protocols to ensure that youth receive assistance from counselors regarding college readiness. It was also noted that further description of how this is monitored for compliance was not addressed and would strengthen the response.
<i>Strengths</i>	Reviewers indicated that the plan included various methods of training and technical assistance, including meeting with college and university financial aid administrators and accessing National Center for Homeless Education resources. It was noted that many liaisons are also the school counselor, given the small size of districts, increasing the likelihood that counselors are providing appropriate support.
<i>Limitations</i>	Reviewers noted that there was little description of how the SEA ensures that LEA strategies and activities are implemented at the school level, as well as tracking of liaison participation in State designated training.
<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>	