



Direct Student Services Provider Application Criteria

For DSS to succeed, a broad array of qualified providers is necessary. Providers may include the district applying for DSS or other districts; community colleges or other institutions of higher education; non-public entities; community-based organizations; or in the case of high-quality academic tutoring, a variety of providers that are selected and approved by the state and appear on the state's list of such providers.

After reviewing model provider applications for other programs in the U.S., Chiefs for Change identified the following promising practices for how states and districts should consider vetting providers:

Process

- Request providers submit electronic applications on a rolling basis
- Conduct multi-phase interviews (virtual or in person) for pre-interview submissions, interviews, and follow-up Q&A
- Have an independent panel review the provider's application
- Propose changes to the provider based on the Chief's recommendations
- Submit the application to the board for approval

Application Components

The application should include sections for a provider to describe and list its:

- Vision, background, and capabilities
- Overview of curriculum, instructional materials, delivery methods, and how they address special needs
- Quality of instruction: instructor credentials and data demonstrating effectiveness
- Accountability: specific course goals and metrics; progress monitoring; assessment and accountability systems to be used by provider
- Proposed tuition to be charged to the state or district, along with supporting documentation
- Financial strength
- References

Evaluation Criteria

The evaluation of a provider's application should consider its:

- Ability to help achieve one or more of the state's goals
 - Will students be more likely to be promoted to the next grade – on time and on level?
 - Will students complete advanced coursework?
 - Is there a certification or pathways to careers?
 - Will the provider's services help students to graduate on time?
 - Will the provider's services help students to be college and career ready?



- Commitment to serve students with special needs
 - How clear is the plan of action?
 - Does the provider have the appropriate materials?
 - Is the provider prepared with the appropriate accommodations?
- Quality of course content/design/instructors
- Did the provider list the curriculum to be used? How strong is this?
- How committed are the faculty, and what are the expectations of them?
- Is the technology provided?
- Is there alignment with state standards / industry-based standards?
- Does dual enrollment meet standards for grade-level expectations?
- Are all instructors fully certified in areas in which they teach? (*Note: this is not required under ESSA.*)
- Commitment to accountability
- Does the provider offer clear and rigorous standards for student achievement?
- Is there a detailed system for improving student achievement? How will it be annualized?
- Does it utilize accepted standards for academic performance and certifications?
- What are the standards for reporting performance?
- Cost effectiveness
 - Is tuition at or below the maximum allowed by the state (if the state/district sets such caps)?
 - Does the provider justify tuition as being at fair market value?
 - What other tuition is related to class materials, activities, and quality?