

Appendix A.
State Interview Protocol for the
Study of State Policies for the Unsafe School Choice Option

Introduction

- 1) Please tell me about your responsibilities at your state educational agency (SEA) and in implementing the Unsafe School Choice Option (USCO).

Probes:

Length of time at SEA and working on USCO

Amount of time dedicated to USCO work

To whom they report on USCO work

Past roles supporting USCO prior to work at state level

- 2) Briefly, please share any state context that you think would be helpful for me to know about your state's policies around school safety and school choice. For example, your state may have a policy that allows students to transfer schools for reasons other than attending a persistently dangerous school.

Process for developing policy

- 3) We found a USCO policy from [year] on your state website. Is that the SEA's current USCO policy? Did you participate in the development of the policy?
- 4) What is the goal of the SEA's policy? If the policy was revised from a prior/original policy, what was the SEA's reason to do so?

- 5) How did the SEA develop the policy and with whom did the SEA consult on policy development?

Probes:

Collaborate with other states

Roles of people included in policy development

Public involvement

Timeline

- 6) [If not addressed by Q4] How did the SEA decide on its definition for "persistently dangerous school"?

Probes:

Consultation with school districts

Types of offenses

Years needed to meet criteria

Different criteria by school size

Other definitions considered

- 7) [If not addressed by Q4] Some state policies have early warning systems to notify schools that have met the identification criteria for at least one year, appeal processes for identified schools, and requirements for corrective action plans for schools identified as persistently dangerous. Why did your state decide to include (or not include) these types of provisions?

8) [If not addressed by Q4] How did the SEA decide on notification and transfer requirements in the policy?

Probes:

Notification and transfer timelines

Transfer procedures, including if a safe school cannot be identified in the same school district

Differences between persistently dangerous schools and students who are the victims of violent criminal offenses

9) Is the SEA currently considering revising its policy? Why?

Implementation of policy

10) Describe the implementation plan and process by which the SEA identifies “persistently dangerous schools,” notifies schools designated as “persistently dangerous,” and ensures that parents are aware of the transfer option.

Probes:

SEA’s role in informing parents and students of options

Methods for parental notification

11) Describe how the transfer requirements are carried out by school districts, including procedures for notification, transfer timelines, and procedures if a safe school cannot be identified in the same school district?

12) What support does the SEA provide to schools that are identified as “persistently dangerous”?

13) [If state’s policy includes an early warning system] Describe how the state’s early warning system works. What is your estimate for the number or percentage of schools that receive an early warning that eventually are identified as “persistently dangerous”? What support does the SEA provide to schools that are identified by the early warning system?

Probes:

Challenges/solutions

How implementation may differ than expected

14) [If state’s policy includes an appeal process for identified schools] Describe how the state’s appeal process for identified schools works. What is your estimate for the number or percentage of schools that successfully appeal their identification?

Probes:

Challenges/solutions

How implementation may differ than expected

15) [If state’s policy requires persistently dangerous schools to submit a corrective action plan to the state] Describe how the state’s corrective action plan requirement works. Please provide an example of an exemplary corrective action plan.

Probes:

State’s role in reviewing, commenting, and monitoring plans

Challenges/solutions

How implementation may differ than expected

State guidance and monitoring

16) What guidance does the SEA provide to districts on how to comply with the USCO provisions? [Ask for copies of guidance documents]

Probes:

Who provides information

How information is provided (e.g., training, website)

Guidance around what a school should do if there are no other safe schools in the district

Differences between persistently dangerous schools and students who are the victims of violent criminal offenses

17) How does the SEA ensure that data used to make determinations is accurate? Who reports the data used to make determinations?

18) Has the SEA ever discovered data inaccuracies? If so, how were the inaccuracies corrected?

19) How do states monitor district compliance in offering transfer to appropriate students?

Probes:

Required documents that must be submitted to the SEA

Differences between persistently dangerous schools and students who are the victims of violent criminal offenses

20) How has the state evaluated the results of the policy to determine it is working as intended?

21) Does the SEA collect data on the number of students that transfer under the USCO policy, the number of schools students transfer from, or the number of schools students transfer into? [If so, ask for data for the previous three years.]

Wrap-Up

22) What challenges have you encountered in developing, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating the state's Unsafe School Choice Option policy?

23) How have you attempted to address those challenges?

24) Given our discussion around the state's development, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the Unsafe School Choice Option policy, is there anything else you would like to share with me that would help me understand your state's full experience?