



**SARA
Overview
and Update**
State Authorization
Reciprocity Agreement
for Distance Education

National Association of State
Administrators and Supervisors
of Private Schools (NASASPS)
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Savannah, Georgia


National Council for
State Authorization
Reciprocity Agreements
A voluntary, regional approach
to state recognition of distance education

Presenter





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What's the problem? (1)



- Our country lags many others in the educational attainment of our 18-34 age population.
- Distance education can play an important role in increasing attainment. We need to maximize its contributions.



What's the problem? (2)

- States and territories regulate higher education within their borders, with varying requirements for out-of-state institutions that want to do business in the state.
- At present there is no alternative to each institution separately pursuing any needed approvals (state authorization) in each state and territory where it enrolls students.

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What's the problem? (3)

- Consequently, thousands of institutions must contact and work with as many as 54 states and territories, and, sometimes, with multiple regulatory agencies in those states.
- That process is inefficient, costly, and not effective in supporting access to high quality distance education throughout the country.

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Goals

SARA establishes a state-level reciprocity process that will support the nation in efforts to increase the educational attainment of its people by making state authorization:

- more efficient, effective, and uniform in regard to necessary and reasonable standards of practice that could span states;
- more effective in dealing with quality and integrity issues that have arisen in some online/distance education offerings; and
- less costly for states and institutions and, thereby, the students they serve.

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SARA: A negotiated compromise



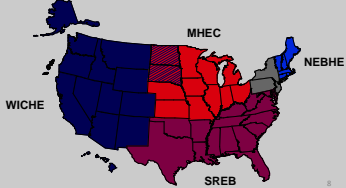

- Institutions' goals
- Regulators' concerns
- Others
 - Accreditors
 - Regional compacts
 - National commission

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The SARA solution






A nation-wide system of reciprocity administered by the **four existing regional compacts**



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Essential principles of SARA (1)

- **Voluntary** for states and institutions.
- Acknowledges the **traditional roles within higher education's "accountability triad"**: federal government, states, and accrediting bodies recognized by the U.S. Department of Education.

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Essential principles of SARA (2)

- Lays out a **framework for state-level reciprocity**, including a governance structure, implementation by the four regional higher education compacts (MHEC, NEBHE, SREB, WICHE), a National Council for SARA to ensure comprehensive national coverage, and a financial plan to support operations.

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Essential principles of SARA (3)

- Requires states to approve their **in-state institutions** for SARA participation (based upon institutional accreditation and financial stability) and resolve student complaints.
- SARA states agree to impose **no additional (non-SARA) fees or requirements** on institutions from other SARA states.

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Essential principles of SARA (4)

- Open to degree-granting **postsecondary institutions from all sectors**: public colleges and universities; independent institutions, both non-profit and for-profit.
- Sets forth a reasonable, **uniform set of triggers of "physical presence"**.
- Preserves state approval and oversight of **on-the-ground campuses**.

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Essential principles of SARA (5)

- Shifts principal oversight responsibilities from the state in which the distance education is being received to the "home state" of the institution offering the instruction. (Host state can also work to resolve problems.)
- Initial funding from Lumina Foundation, eventual reliance on institutional fees paid to the National Council for SARA.

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Benefits to students

- Expands access to educational offerings.
- Should lead to better resolution of complaints from students in SARA states.
- Reduces a rapidly growing institutional cost that is in one way or another passed along to students.
- Should enhance overall quality of distance education.

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Benefits to institutions

- Enables more efficient provision of distance education to a broader market.
- Reduces number of applications to other states.
- Reduces number of other-state regulations to monitor for changes.
- Reduces costs.
- Reduced costs = potentially lower fees for students.

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Benefits to states



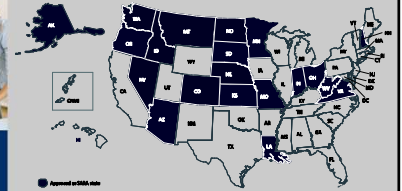
- Expands educational offerings to residents.
- Allows SARA states to focus on their home-state institutions.
- Maintains state regulation of on-the-ground instruction offered by out-of-state institutions.
- Other SARA states will help resolve complaints.
- Reduces costs for institutions.
- No fees charged to states to participate in SARA.

STATE ACTIONS REGARDING SARA



State	Year	Legislation	Effective Date	Notes
Alabama	2011	HB 100	10/1/11	
Alaska	2011	SB 10	9/1/11	
Arizona	2011	SB 100	9/1/11	
Arkansas	2011	SB 100	9/1/11	
California	2011	SB 100	9/1/11	
Colorado	2011	SB 100	9/1/11	
Connecticut	2011	SB 100	9/1/11	
Delaware	2011	SB 100	9/1/11	
Florida	2011	SB 100	9/1/11	
Georgia	2011	SB 100	9/1/11	
Hawaii	2011	SB 100	9/1/11	
Idaho	2011	SB 100	9/1/11	
Illinois	2011	SB 100	9/1/11	
Indiana	2011	SB 100	9/1/11	
Iowa	2011	SB 100	9/1/11	
Kansas	2011	SB 100	9/1/11	
Kentucky	2011	SB 100	9/1/11	
Louisiana	2011	SB 100	9/1/11	
Maine	2011	SB 100	9/1/11	
Maryland	2011	SB 100	9/1/11	
Massachusetts	2011	SB 100	9/1/11	
Michigan	2011	SB 100	9/1/11	
Minnesota	2011	SB 100	9/1/11	
Mississippi	2011	SB 100	9/1/11	
Missouri	2011	SB 100	9/1/11	
Montana	2011	SB 100	9/1/11	
Nebraska	2011	SB 100	9/1/11	
Nevada	2011	SB 100	9/1/11	
New Hampshire	2011	SB 100	9/1/11	
New Jersey	2011	SB 100	9/1/11	
New Mexico	2011	SB 100	9/1/11	
New York	2011	SB 100	9/1/11	
North Carolina	2011	SB 100	9/1/11	
North Dakota	2011	SB 100	9/1/11	
Ohio	2011	SB 100	9/1/11	
Oklahoma	2011	SB 100	9/1/11	
Oregon	2011	SB 100	9/1/11	
Pennsylvania	2011	SB 100	9/1/11	
Rhode Island	2011	SB 100	9/1/11	
South Carolina	2011	SB 100	9/1/11	
South Dakota	2011	SB 100	9/1/11	
Tennessee	2011	SB 100	9/1/11	
Texas	2011	SB 100	9/1/11	
Utah	2011	SB 100	9/1/11	
Vermont	2011	SB 100	9/1/11	
Virginia	2011	SB 100	9/1/11	
Washington	2011	SB 100	9/1/11	
West Virginia	2011	SB 100	9/1/11	
Wisconsin	2011	SB 100	9/1/11	
Wyoming	2011	SB 100	9/1/11	

State Actions



State Actions

■ Legislation passed or ok
■ Approved or SARAs

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State Actions

■ Legislation introduced
■ Legislation passed or ok
■ Approved or SARAs

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State Actions

As of April 15, 2015:

- 20 SARA States: Alaska, Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Indiana, Kansas, Louisiana, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, North Dakota, Ohio, Oregon, South Dakota, Virginia, Washington and West Virginia
- Necessary legislation passed in an additional seven states
- An additional four states have determined that no legislation is needed to enable participation in SARA

<http://nc-sara.org/content/sara-state-status>

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Learn more about SARA 



- NC-SARA website: www.nc-sara.org
- To receive our newsletter, sign up at: www.nc-sara.org
- Regional Education Compacts:
 - MHEC – www.mhec.org
 - NEBHE – www.nebhe.org
 - SREB – www.sreb.org
 - WICHE – www.wiche.edu

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