



## **Ask the Experts: K-12 Spotlight Webinar Transcript**

### **Slide 1: Title Slide**

#### **MODERATOR:**

- Good afternoon everybody. My name is Lauren Caricato and I want to welcome you to today's Ask the Experts: K-12 Spotlight Webinar.
- We'll begin with a few housekeeping notes:
  - A live question and answer session will follow this presentation. You can submit questions using the Question and Answer / Technical Difficulties pod to our subject matter experts.
  - If you experience technical difficulties, please try to provide a brief description of the issue through the Question and Answer / Technical Difficulties pod and our team will try our best to help you out remotely and address the situation.
  - Finally, please complete the webinar attendance poll located on the right side of the screen so we have an idea of how many people are watching.
- A recording and copy of today's presentation — the slides that you are seeing today — will be available on the Stakeholder Webinars page shortly after today's event. If your colleagues were unable to join today, please remind them to watch this presentation.
- We encourage those watching to provide feedback through the Stakeholder Satisfaction Survey at [StudyintheStates.dhs.gov/Survey](https://StudyintheStates.dhs.gov/Survey).

### **Slide 2: Presentation Overview**

#### **MODERATOR:**

- During this presentation, we'll cover:
  - Information on how SEVP engages with K-12 schools;



- An overview of policies specifically for K-12 schools;
  - A review of record keeping and reporting requirements;
  - Best practices, such as for travel and student housing;
  - An overview of the role of SEVP field representatives; and
  - Helpful resources.
- Following this presentation, we'll move on to our question and answer session.

### **Slide 3: Presenters**

#### **MODERATOR:**

- Francine, Mike and Anastasia, could you briefly introduce yourselves to those watching?

#### **FRANCINE:**

- Hi everyone, I'm Francine Hunter and I currently work in the SEVP Analysis and Operations Center. I've been with the program for about ten years, five of them since the inception of the SAOC.

#### **MIKE:**

- Hello, I'm Mike Hallanan and I've been with SEVP since 2003.

#### **ANASTASIA:**

- Good afternoon everyone, I'm Anastasia Sotiropoulos and I'm an SEVP field representative for the Maryland and Delaware area. I've been with SEVP for about five and a half years.



## **Slide 4: Engagement with K-12 Schools**

### **MODERATOR:**

- We'll begin with discussing how SEVP currently engages with K-12 schools. SEVP is always looking for ways to increase our outreach efforts and we need your help to identify potential K-12 organizations for outreach.

## **Slide 5: Outreach to K-12 Community**

### **MODERATOR:**

- SEVP regularly conducts outreach to educate and update stakeholders on policies and international student trends. Some of the many ways we conduct outreach with the academic community include:
  - Field representatives located across the country;
  - Conferences and events hosted by the academic community; and
  - Informational webinars where school officials can ask questions and hear directly from SEVP.
- We work with a variety of different audiences to reach the academic community, including:
  - School officials and administrators;
  - Academic associations;
  - State associations; and
  - Student groups.

## **Slide 6: Your Input Needed**

### **MODERATOR:**

- We want to know who you represent and what organizations you interact with. We encourage those attending today to use the poll feature located on the side of your screen to respond to the two questions we've uploaded. The results of these two polls will help SEVP increase outreach with K-12 schools.



- You can select one or multiple options from the list on your screen. We also encourage viewers to submit a specific organization’s name in the Questions for SEVP and Technical Difficulties pod.

## **Slide 7: Visit the Updated Conferences Page**

### **MODERATOR:**

- As I mentioned, SEVP presents at many conferences and events.
- On the subject of SEVP’s outreach efforts, we encourage you to learn more about the conferences and events that we attend through the Study in the States [Conferences page](#).
- On this page, visitors can:
  - Subscribe to the monthly SEVP Conference Bulletin;
  - Submit a request for SEVP or another government partner — like USCIS or the U.S. Department of State — to participate in an upcoming conference or event;
  - Learn about the different audience groups the program engages with on a regular basis;
  - Submit questions prior to an event;
  - Learn about SEVP-hosted webinars; and
  - Read the Conference Bulletin or SEVP Spotlight.
- I think that about wraps us up with our outreach overview. And, thank you to everyone that took the poll — we’re receiving some great feedback. Moving onto policy, Mike would you be able to talk about the unique policies affecting K-12 schools?



## **Slide 8: Policy Overview**

### **MIKE:**

- Sure, we'll start with discussing some of the unique regulations and policies that affect K-12 schools and students. As a school official, it is important to remember that an understanding of SEVP policies and regulations will help ensure that your school remains in compliance with SEVP's requirements.

## **Slide 9: Unique Policies for K-12 Schools**

### **MIKE:**

- The primary distinction is whether you are from a private school or a public school.
- We'll begin with policies for private schools. Like other SEVP-certified schools, private K-12 schools at the primary and secondary grade levels are eligible for SEVP certification. Federal regulations place no limit on length of time an F-1 student may be enrolled at a private SEVP-certified school.
  - As with any school enrolling F or M international students, your schools must be certified by SEVP to enroll these students and issue them the Form I-20.
  - Additionally, students attending a private school are responsible for paying the program's tuition.
  - Primary distinction for you as school officials is that when developing the student's Form I-20, you need to account for the student's ability to pay the tuition on the Form I-20.
- In comparison, public schools are only eligible for SEVP certification at the high school level, in grades nine through 12. F-1 and M-1 students cannot attend public kindergarten through eighth grade because those schools cannot be SEVP certified.
  - Public high schools are only able to enroll an F-1 or M-1 student for one year. This one year is the total for any public school that the student



- attends and is not dependent on the school's location. This is an aggregate total; F-1 or M-1 students cannot spend one year at one public high school and then transfer to another public high school. However, students may transfer from a public high school to an SEVP-certified private high school to continue their education.
- Public school students must pay the full, unsubsidized per capita cost of attending school, and this payment must occur before the prospective student applies for an F-1 or M-1 visa. The student should be able to present proof of payment at the visa interview and at a U.S. port of entry. The U.S. Department of Education developed a website to assist with calculating the per capita cost of attendance. The link is available on the slide.

## **Slide 10: Summer ESL Programs**

### **MIKE:**

- SEVP classifies K-12 summer ESL programs depending on how the program are used by students — primarily, whether the program is a standalone summer ESL program or an ESL program offered when a school's primary or secondary program of study is on annual break.
- Please note that this information does not address students engaged in ESL as part of their regular K-12 program of study. Those programs do not require separate SEVP certification.
- A standalone program addresses a scenario where students arrive in Initial status and plan to attend a different school in the fall.
  - Standalone programs must obtain their own SEVP certification, perhaps through an update to your school's Form I-17, and must issue separate Forms I-20. The Form I-20 must be different than the form for the student's regular course of study, including in the education level and major field of study listed.



- Additionally, per the Accreditation of English Language Training Program Act, these types of programs must be accredited by an accrediting body recognized by the Department of Education.
- In comparison, some summer ESL programs enroll students while they are in a different program of study. This type of study may be considered study incidental to status for continuing Active students or it may also be considered part of the orientation period for new Initial students.

### **Slide 11: Completion of a K-12 Course of Study**

#### **MIKE:**

- Graduating K-12 students may transfer to an SEVP-certified postsecondary school in the United States. These are the options for students that complete a K-12 or high school course of study in the United States.
  - In this situation, a student follows the regular application and acceptance process as other students and keeps the same SEVIS record for their postsecondary education. The student's DSO will transfer the student's SEVIS record to the postsecondary school.
- Upon completion of the final U.S. course of study, a student has a 60-day grace period. This period can be used for transferring, changing the student's visa status or departing the United States.

### **Slide 12: Pre-submitted Question — Student Transfer**

#### **MIKE:**

- We have our first pre-submitted question: What is the best practice for handling transfer-out requests? Can a DSO sign multiple Forms I-20 for the same student before initiating the transfer out in SEVIS? How should DSOs determine the transfer date?
- Regulation defines the transfer release date as "the current semester or session completion date, or the date of expected transfer if earlier than the



established academic cycle.” As with any transfer situation, the student should work with both DSOs, requesting the transfer from the transfer-out school and demonstrating acceptance to the transfer-in school to the transfer-out DSO.

- A DSO does not need to sign multiple Form I-20s before initiating the transfer out in SEVIS. Remember, transfer pertains to the move of a student’s SEVIS record, as opposed to a Form I-20.
- Considerations for setting the transfer release date allow for the following:
  - Time to complete all study at the transfer-out school;
  - Time for travel outside of the United States, if applicable; and
  - Time for working during school vacation, if applicable.
- Remember, a DSO cannot set a transfer date for more than six months in the future.

### **Slide 13: Record Keeping and Reporting**

#### **FRANCINE:**

- Next, we’ll discuss student record keeping and reporting requirements and provide some tips for school officials. Remember, DSOs must keep school and student records up to date or risk consequences from SEVP.

### **Slide 14: The Form I-17 — Overview**

#### **FRANCINE:**

- A school’s Form I-17 is the document a school uses to apply for approval to enroll F-1 and/or M-1 nonimmigrant students. Here at SEVP, we approve courses of study described in the Form I-17. Remember, schools cannot issue Forms I-20 for programs not covered by the Form I-17.
  - The Form I-17 is a living document updated by school officials to reflect any changes to a school’s information.





- An update to the Form I-17 is not the same as the recertification process. Updates to the Form I-17 should be made on a regular basis and DSOs should not wait until recertification to submit an update.
- In comparison, recertification is a process that occurs every two years. Schools are still expected to respond to SEVP's recertification notices even if SEVP approves a school's updates or updates are pending.

### **Slide 15: Pre-submitted Question — Form I-17 Updates**

#### **FRANCINE:**

- We have another pre-submitted question: How should a high school update its Form I-17 if it is moving to a new address?
- First, the DSO must log into SEVIS and change the address or addresses listed on the school's Form I-17. If the school's main campus location changes, the school must pay \$655 to SEVP through our online payment system at Pay.gov. School officials will receive an email request payment and should respond with:
  - Name of institution,
  - Institution code,
  - Pay.gov tracking ID, and
  - Reference location change.
- If there has not been an actual change of location, schools must submit evidence that the location has not changed. Examples of evidence include:
  - Approval from the U.S. Postal Service;
  - Evidence of ownership or leasing information; and
  - A current campus map with the appropriate street names.
- All items must be scanned and the attachments sent as a response to the original payment request email received.



## **Slide 16: Student Reporting Requirements — Program Start**

### **FRANCINE:**

- Remember, within 30 days of the program’s start date, DSOs should report the following changes in SEVIS:
  - Initial student reporting,
  - Active student reporting for each term or semester,
  - Initial student records for F-1 or M-1 transfers, and
  - Nonimmigrants changing to F-1 or M-1 status.
- As a quick note, students in Initial status should report to the DSO within 30 days.

## **Slide 17: Pre-submitted Question — Student Registration**

### **FRANCINE:**

- Now we’ll answer another pre-submitted question related to student registration: Can SEVP clarify when DSOs should register their students in SEVIS?
- DSOs must register students at the start of each term or twice per year for most K-12 schools. In fact, SEVP recommends that it may be sufficient to do this once per year if the DSO can make sure that all of the terms are covered. For SEVP, registration means reporting a student’s full-time enrollment and participation at the school for that term.
- SEVP needs DSOs to verify that a student remains engaged in a course of study twice per year — once in the fall and once at the start of the spring term, which follows winter break.



## **Slide 18: Student Reporting Requirements — Other Reporting**

### **FRANCINE:**

- We want to remind DSOs of a few other reporting requirements.
- After the SEVIS record release date but prior to the program start date, DSOs are required to create Draft student records for F-1 transfer students.
- Before program end date, DSOs should report student graduation and program completion dates in SEVIS.
- Remember to register a student’s SEVIS record at the start of each academic term or year. DSOs must report whether or not an Active student reported and enrolled in classes within 30 days of the start of the session.
- For more information, visit: [ICE.gov/SEVIS/DSO-Requirements](https://ice.dhs.gov/SEVIS/DSO-Requirements), which outlines all the reporting requirements.

## **Slide 19: Tips for School Officials — Ensure Accurate and Timely Reporting**

### **FRANCINE:**

- Next we will provide a few tips for school officials to help with record keeping and reporting requirements.
- The first tip is to remember reporting time limits. Federal regulation requires DSOs to report changes to student and school information within 21 days.
- Additionally, DSOs should ensure that they are accurately reporting a student’s information in SEVIS. Remember, a student’s record should contain where the student resides and the Form I-17 should reflect the school’s current operations.
- DSOs are required by federal regulation to update and maintain student and school records. SEVP is issuing Remedial Action Plans for inaccurate student records.



- Examples of errors include wrong date of birth or wrong education level. Please make sure that your records are up to date so your school does not receive a Remedial Action Plan from SEVP.

## **Slide 20: Tips for School Officials — Keep Important Dates in Mind**

### **FRANCINE:**

- School officials should remember important dates, including:
  - Your school's Certification Expiration Date, commonly referred to as a CED. DSOs will receive SEVIS notifications starting 180 days prior to the CED. Upon receiving this notification, schools should prepare for the recertification process, reviewing the Form I-17 to ensure the information is accurate and up to date.
  - Any upcoming events in your office, such as a DSO's planned retirement, staffing changes or any event that can affect school's ability to file for recertification.
    - As a best practice: always designate backup school officials in case you lose one for some reason.
  - Additionally, remember your school's graduation dates. This represents the end of a student's program of study and is useful for tracking the 60-day grace period.

## **Slide 21: Tips for School Officials — Take Action in SEVIS**

### **FRANCINE:**

- Another tip for school officials is to log in regularly to avoid losing SEVIS access and to verify data accuracy.
- PDSOs and DSOs, you should ensure your contact information is up to date. Remember to regularly check that all DSO email addresses in SEVIS are accurate. This action ensures that schools can continue to receive notifications and RFEs from SEVP.



- Additionally, do not share SEVIS passwords. Password sharing is a security risk that compromises the accountability, integrity and confidentiality of SEVIS.
- Finally, keep login information secure. Do not save your password to an office computer used by other employees and always replace your password if you believe it has been compromised.

## **Slide 22: Best Practices**

### **MIKE:**

- Next, we'll provide some best practices for DSOs and students at K-12 schools. You can learn about additional best practices for K-12 students on Study in the States.

## **Slide 23: DSOs — Student Housing and Oversight**

### **MIKE:**

- This slide speaks to those of you in public schools and nonresidential private schools. You should be asking these questions for yourself, but you want to have some idea that there is someone trustworthy looking after the student.
- First, we'll start with a look at best practices for student housing. As a DSO, you should ensure that the student has suitable accommodations prior to their arrival in the United States. It's helpful to encourage students and parents to communicate with host families or other responsible adults prior to the student's arrival.
- It's also important to determine what oversight of the living situation a school will provide for a student. Additionally, consider whether the school will provide counseling to the student while they are in the United States.
- It's important to make sure that students have some means of recourse if they have any difficulties, have a misunderstanding or are being mistreated. It is important that students have an office at the school they can turn to.



## **Slide 24: DSOs — Verifying Financial Support**

### **MIKE:**

- We've received several questions from stakeholders about how DSOs should verify financial support and what qualifies as financial support. Remember, evidence of financial support includes, but is not limited to:
  - Family bank statements;
  - Documentation from a sponsor;
  - Financial aid letters; and
  - Scholarship letters.
- Certain schools may have specific requirements for acceptable documentation. As we discussed earlier, students at private schools are required to prove they can cover the cost of tuition, while students at public high schools must pay the full, unsubsidized per capita cost of attending school.
- DSOs should ensure students have sufficient finances to cover the cost of their program. Additionally, DSOs must receive evidence of a student's financial support before issuing a Form I-20.

## **Slide 25: DSOs — Student Documentation**

### **MIKE:**

- SEVP encourages parents to provide students with formal legal documents and provisions for medical care while in the United States.
- Remember that federal regulation requires that DSOs issue the Form I-20 directly to a student. Additionally, admission to a school and issuance of the Form I-20 should be based upon the student's qualifications. By regulation, a third party cannot issue the Form I-20 or hold the form for any reason.
- As a general student documentation best practice, SEVP encourages students or parents to have control of:
  - The Form I-20,
  - The I-901 SEVIS Fee payment receipt, and



- Proof of finances.

## **Slide 26: Students — Travel**

### **MIKE:**

- Student travel is another hot topic with DSOs. School officials can assist their students that are preparing for international travel by reminding students to bring all necessary travel documents and updating them through proper procedures as needed.
- Necessary travel re-entry documents include:
  - An updated, signed copy of the Form I-20;
  - A current passport (valid for at least six months);
  - A valid U.S. visa; and
  - Proof of I-901 SEVIS Fee payment on the current SEVIS ID and, possibly, financial statements.
- Students should keep these documents safe and not in their checked luggage while traveling. These actions will help a student avoid receiving the Form I-515A upon readmission to the United States.
- Additionally, school officials should ensure students understand what to expect when they depart and re-enter the United States. Remind students to be prepared and knowledgeable about what occurs at a U.S. port of entry. Students should also understand what the Form I-515A is and what actions to take if they receive one.

## **Slide 27: Pre-submitted Question — Student Travel**

### **MIKE:**

- On the subject of travel, we received a pre-submitted question asking: What are the rules when an F-1 student wants to visit Canada or Mexico while attending school in the United States?



- Remember, students must receive approval from their DSO prior to international travel. After receiving this approval, the DSO will provide the student with an updated copy of the Form I-20.
- It is important to remember that students must maintain student status while away from school, even during a summer holiday, though they can travel.
- It's important to make sure that prior to the student's return the student has the proper status in SEVIS.
- And, as noted on the previous slide, upon re-entry, students must pass an inspection from CBP. Students should be aware of what to expect at a U.S. port of entry and during the readmission process.
- One issue is the problem of expired visas while a student is studying in the states. In and of themselves, expired visas are not a problem. Since it is an admissions document, the expired visa has no effect on the student's status. However, if the student leaves the country to travel with an expired visa, the student will have to return with a new one.

## **Slide 28: SEVP Field Representatives**

### **ANASTASIA:**

- Good afternoon everyone, I'm here to speak today about the SEVP field representative. I'll give a little bit of an overview of SEVP field representatives. Remember, we're here to assist DSOs and are an excellent resource for learning about SEVP policies and processes.

## **Slide 29: Mission**

### **ANASTASIA:**

- SEVP field representatives serve as liaisons between SEVP and SEVP-certified schools. We provide localized support to school officials and enhance national





security by fostering an understanding of regulatory compliance and SEVIS data integrity.

- We're primarily here to help the academic community adhere to nonimmigrant student rules and regulations, as well as SEVP policies and directives. However, field representatives are required to report — through established SEVP communication channels — any suspicious activity, fraud and/or gross negligence observed while performing our duties. Once this information is reported and received, the appropriate federal authorities will handle it.

### **Slide 30: Geographical Regions**

#### **ANASTASIA:**

- The map on this slide illustrates the location of SEVP field representatives across the United States. SEVP field representatives are divided into three regional groups — eastern, central and western.
  - Each region comprises 20 field representatives for a nationwide total of 60 field representatives. Presently, SEVP has field representatives deployed to 57 territories across the United States.
- When an SEVP field representative is deployed to a territory, schools are contacted within a week of deployment. The size and location of the 60 territories is based on the number of SEVP-certified schools “clustered” in a specific geographical area.

### **Slide 31: Duties**

#### **ANASTASIA:**

- Normally, SEVP field representatives meet with schools in their territory a minimum of once per year. We usually make scheduled appointments with the DSO and do not visit unannounced. We'll work with school officials to develop a meeting agenda and to answer any questions that they have.



- For example, we help school officials understand the SEVP recertification process and work with PDSOs and DSOs to provide support and answer questions.
- We also help SEVP-certified school officials understand SEVP rules and regulations and answer general questions related to the nonimmigrant student process. However, we will not answer questions or discuss topics better addressed by USCIS, CBP or the Department of State. Additionally, we will not answer specific questions about nonimmigrant student and exchange visitor visas.
- Field representatives also educate DSOs on SEVIS enhancements. It's pretty common for us to discuss previous and upcoming SEVIS enhancements, as well as to assist with any required actions that need to be taken.
- Finally, we'll also attend conferences, events and meetings in our territory that pertain to nonimmigrant students.

## **Slide 32: Resources**

### **ANASTASIA:**

- Before we finish today's presentation, I want to take a moment to discuss some of the many free resources for DSOs, as well as for K-12 students and their parents, on Study in the States. Stakeholders can access Study in the States at [StudyintheStates.dhs.gov](https://StudyintheStates.dhs.gov).

## **Slide 33: Study in the States**

### **ANASTASIA:**

- Study in the States offers numerous resources for school officials and international students. International students and their parents can translate Study in the States content into 90 different languages.
- Some of the many resources on Study in the States include:



- Videos and tutorials, such as our [Form I-17 tutorial](#) to help school officials with filling out the Form I-17 and the [I-901 SEVIS Fee tutorial](#) to help international students with paying the I-901 SEVIS Fee;
- The [Study Guide to the States](#), which describes each step in the international student process;
- Our new [Resource Library](#), where DSOs can download and print resources about the international student process. We recently updated the Resource Library to include a life cycle graphic for students at private and public K-12 schools; and
- The [Mapping SEVIS by the Numbers](#) feature, which allows users to view SEVIS data by continent, region and country.

## **Slide 34: K-12 Resource Pages**

### **ANASTASIA:**

- SEVP designed resource pages on Study in the States [specifically for K-12 school officials](#). These pages contain hot topics for K-12 schools, such as verification of student finances and information for international student athletes.
- We also developed a [page with information for private K-12 schools](#), where school officials can learn about summer ESL program requirements and view information for dioceses and religious schools.
- There's also a [page with information for public high schools](#) that allows visitors to learn about the regulatory requirements mentioned earlier in this presentation.



## **Slide 35: SEVIS Help Hub**

### **ANASTASIA:**

- Another resource for school officials is the [SEVIS Help Hub](#) on Study in the States. The SEVIS Help Hub is the central location for information about upcoming SEVIS releases and DSO SEVIS reporting requirements.
- Content in the SEVIS Help Hub is updated on a regular basis and includes:
  - Learning how to complete the Form I-17 and create a SEVIS record;
  - Learning how to manage school information and student records in SEVIS;
  - Accessing webinars, job aids and information about upcoming releases; and
  - Viewing notifications about recently updated SEVIS Help Hub content and contact the SEVIS team.

## **Slide 36: Engage with SEVP – Stay Connected**

### **ANASTASIA**

- School officials can stay up to date with the latest news and content through [our blog](#) on Study in the States, which is updated regularly with best practices, current events and more.
- We also have several [publications](#), including the quarterly SEVP Spotlight newsletter and the monthly SEVP Conference Bulletin.
- SEVP welcomes the opportunity to participate in conferences or events. Submit a request for SEVP to attend an upcoming conference through the [Event Request Form](#) on Study in the States.
- Also stay up to date with the latest information by following Study in the States on [Twitter](#), liking Study in the States on [Facebook](#) or connecting with SEVP on [LinkedIn](#).



## **Slide 37: SEVP Values Your Feedback**

### **ANASTASIA:**

- As we mentioned at the beginning of today's webinar, SEVP wants your feedback on this presentation and any other SEVP presentations that you attend. We review comments throughout the year and use them to help guide content at future presentations and webinars. You can access the survey at [StudyintheStates.dhs.gov/Survey](https://StudyintheStates.dhs.gov/Survey).

## **Slide 38: SEVP Response Center**

### **ANTASIA:**

- For any additional questions, you can contact the SRC. You can reach the SRC by phone at 703-603-3400 or 800-892-4829, or by email. For case-specific questions, please email [SEVP@ice.dhs.gov](mailto:SEVP@ice.dhs.gov). For SEVIS technical issues, please email [SEVISHelpDesk@ice.dhs.gov](mailto:SEVISHelpDesk@ice.dhs.gov).
- The SRC changed its hours of operation to Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. ET, except holidays. The SRC is closed every Wednesday from 12:50 to 1:20 p.m. ET for system maintenance and testing.

## **Slide 39: Question and Answer Session**

### **ANASTASIA:**

- That concludes the presentation portion of today's webinar. For the remainder of this presentation, we will take live questions from those in the audience.
- Please submit your questions through the Question and Answer pod on the right side of your screen. We will do our best to address as many questions as possible during this session.