

SARA Policy Modification Process (PMP) Process Document

1. Purpose & Authority

The Policy Modification Process (PMP) outlined in subsection 8.2 of the *SARA Policy Manual* provides a transparent, collaborative process for the broader SARA community to review and adopt amendments to the *SARA Policy Manual*. This process ensures that changes reflect SARA's foundational purposes of interstate reciprocity and consumer protection.

Core Requirement: To be adopted, a policy modification must be approved by **all four Regional Education Compacts via their Regional Steering Committees** and the **NC-SARA Board of Directors**.

2. Process Participants

Submitters: Any person or entity, including Regional Education Compacts, member states, participating institutions, NC-SARA staff, working groups established by the NC-SARA Board of Directors or Regional Education Compacts, or any other person or group with an interest in state authorization reciprocity. 8.2.f.1.iii.

NC-SARA Staff/Policy Implementation Team (PIT): Manages the administrative workflow, portal, alignment checks, outreach, and collaboration.

Impact Analysis Team: NC-SARA, in collaboration with the four Regional Education Compacts, assesses the potential operational and compliance impact of proposals and implementation dates.

SARA State Portal Entities (SPEs): Contribute throughout the process through committee and working group participation, RSC deliberation, and collaboration with PMP submitters and SARA-participating institutions.

Regional Steering Committees (RSCs): Review and votes on submitted proposals on behalf of the Regional Education Compacts.

NC-SARA Board of Directors: Conducts the final review and votes on proposals that were approved by all four Regional Education Compacts through their Regional Steering Committees.

3. Process Lifecycle & Timeline

The PMP cycle runs the calendar year.

Phase I: Submission & Alignment (January – March)

Call for Proposals: The submission portal generally opens in mid-January and remains open for three weeks as reflected in the cycle calendar.

Submission Deadline: All initial proposals submitted by mid-February as reflected in the cycle calendar.

Alignment Review: After the PMP submission deadline, NC-SARA Staff and Regional Education Compacts via their Regional Steering Committees identify related or overlapping proposals and encourage submitters to meet and collaborate with one another as appropriate.

Phase II: Refinement & Public Comment (March – July)

Amendment Period: Proposers may amend or withdraw their proposals generally between March and June as reflected in the cycle calendar.

Public Comment (First Call): Open generally from **early March to early April** as reflected in the cycle calendar.

Policy Modification Process Public Forum: Held generally in late April as reflected in the cycle calendar.

Public Comment (Second Call): Open generally from early June to early July as reflected in the cycle calendar.

Impact Analysis: The Impact Analysis Team assesses all finalized proposals between early June and early July.

Phase III: Voting & Approval (July – October)

Regional Education Compact Voting: *Regional Steering Committees (RSCs) review and vote to approve or not approve each proposal and provide a rationale for any decision not to approve a proposed policy modification.*

Deadline: First week of September as reflected in the cycle calendar.

Transparency: Results are posted publicly within one week as reflected in the cycle calendar.

NC-SARA Board Voting: *The NC-SARA Board of Directors reviews proposals approved by the four Regional Education Compacts via their Regional Steering Committees.*

Meeting Date: Fall Board Meeting

Note: Proposed policy modifications not approved by each of the four Regional Education Compacts shall be provided to the NC-SARA Board for informational purposes but shall not be reviewed for approval.

Phase IV: Implementation (October – December)

Outcomes: Notices of approval or non-approval (with rationale) are sent to submitters in October/November.

Publication: Proposed policy modifications that have been approved by each Regional Education Compact and the NC-SARA Board of Directors shall be adopted and incorporated in the *SARA Policy Manual* within sixty days of such approval.

4. Exigent Circumstances

Proposed policy modifications based on exigent circumstances (e.g., any occasion or instance for which federal or state assistance is needed to supplement local efforts to save lives and to protect property and public health and safety, or to lessen or avert the threat of a catastrophe in any part of the United States) may be considered and approved by each of the Regional Education Compacts via their Regional Steering Committees and the NC-SARA Board of Directors outside of this schedule.